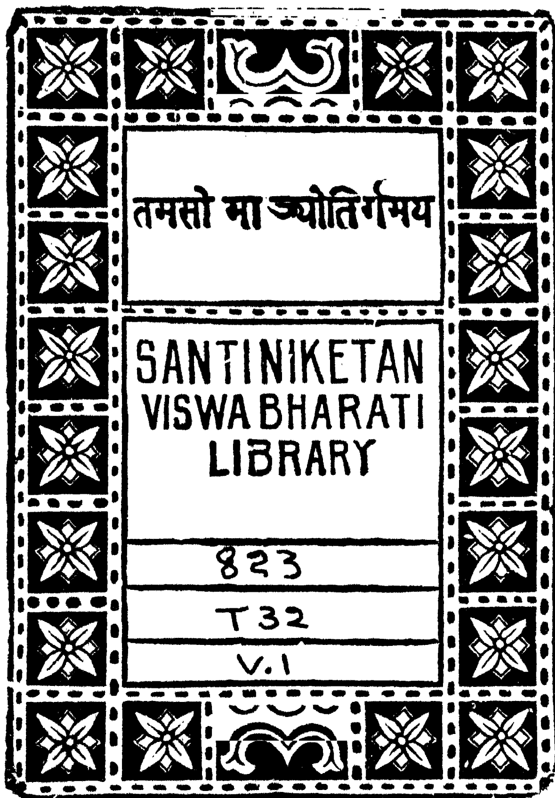

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THE

HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND, Esq.

COLONEL

IN THE SERVICE OF HER MAJESTY Q. ANNE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

(By W. M. THACKERAY.)

COPYRIGHT EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1852.

Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM BINGHAM, LORD ASHBURTON.

MY DEAR LORD,

THE writer of a book which copies the manners and language of Queen Anne's time, must not omit the Dedication to the Patron; and I ask leave to inscribe these volumes to your Lordship for the sake of the great kindness and friendship which I owe to you and yours.

My volumes will reach you when the Author is on his voyage to a country where your name is as well known as here. Wherever I am, I shall gratefully regard you; and shall not be the less welcomed in America because I am

Your obliged friend and servant,

W. M. THACKERAY.

LONDON, *October* 18, 1852.

PREFACE.

THE ESMONDS OF VIRGINIA.

The estate of Castlewood, in Virginia, which was given to our ancestors by King Charles the First, as some return for the sacrifices made in His Majesty's cause by the Esmond family, lies in Westmoreland county, between the rivers Potomac and Rappahannoc, and was once as great as an English Principality, though in the early times its revenues were but small. Indeed for near eighty years after our forefathers possessed them, our plantations were in the hands of factors, who enriched themselves one after another, though a few scores of hogsheads of tobacco were all the produce, that for long after the Restoration, our family received from their Virginian estates.

My dear and honoured father, Colonel Henry Esmond, whose history, written by himself, is contained in the accompanying volumes, came to Virginia in the year 1718, built his house of Castlewood, and here permanently settled. After a long stormy life in England, he passed the remainder of his many years in peace and honour in this country; how beloved and respected by all his fellow-citizens, how inexpressibly dear to his family, I need not say. His whole life

was a benefit to all who were connected with him. He gave the best example, the best advice, the most bounteous hospitality to his friends; the tenderest care to his dependants; and bestowed on those of his immediate family such a blessing of fatherly love and protection, as can never be thought of, by us at least, without veneration and thankfulness; and my son's children, whether established here in our Republic or at home, in the always beloved mother country, from which our late quarrel hath separated us, may surely be proud to be descended from one, who in all ways was so truly noble.

My dear mother died in 1736, soon after our return from England, whither my parents took me for my education; and where I made the acquaintance of Mr. Warrington, whom my children never saw. When it pleased Heaven, in the bloom of his youth, and after but a few months of a most happy union, to remove him from me, I owed my recovery from the grief which that calamity caused me, mainly to my dearest father's tenderness, and then to the blessing vouchsafed to me in the birth of my two beloved boys. I know the fatal differences which separated them in politics never disunited their hearts; and, as I can love them both, whether wearing the King's colours or the Republic's; I am sure that they love me, and one another, and him above all, my father and theirs, the dearest friend of their childhood; the noble gentleman, who bred them from their infancy in the practice and knowledge of Truth, and Love, and Honour.

My children will never forget the appearance and figure of their revered grandfather; and I wish I possessed the art of drawing, (which my papa had in

perfection,) so that I could leave to our descendants a portrait of one who was so good and so respected. My father was of a dark complexion, with a very great forehead, and dark hazel eyes, overhung by eye-brows which remained black long after his hair was white. His nose was aquiline, his smile extraordinary sweet. How well I remember it, and how little any description I can write can recall his image! He was of rather low stature, not being above five feet seven inches in height; he used to laugh at my sons, whom he called his crutches, and say they were grown too tall for him to lean upon. But small as he was he had a perfect grace and majesty of deportment, such as I have never seen in this country, except perhaps in our friend, Mr. Washington; and commanded respect wherever he appeared.

In all bodily exercises he excelled, and showed an extraordinary quickness and agility. Of fencing he was especially fond, and made my two boys proficients in that art; so much so, that when the French came to this country with Monsieur Rochambeau, not one of his officers was superior to my Henry, and he was not the equal of my poor George, who had taken the King's side in our lamentable but glorious war of independence.

Neither my father, nor my mother ever wore powder in their hair; both their heads were as white as silver, as I can remember them. My dear mother possessed to the last an extraordinary brightness and freshness of complexion; nor would people believe that she did not wear rouge. At sixty years of age, she still looked young, and was quite agile. It was not until after that dreadful siege of our house by the Indians, which

left me a widow ere I was a mother, that my dear mother's health broke. She never recovered her terror and anxiety of those days, which ended so fatally for me, then a bride scarce six months married, and died in my father's arms ere my own year of widowhood was over.

From that day, until the last of his dear and honoured life, it was my delight and consolation to remain with him as his comforter and companion; and from those little notes, which my mother hath made here and there in the volumes in which my father describes his adventures in Europe, I can well understand the extreme devotion with which she regarded him; a devotion so passionate and exclusive as to prevent her I think from loving any other person except with an inferior regard, her whole thoughts being centered on this one object of affection and worship. I know that before her, my dear Father did not show the love which he had for his daughter, and in her last and most sacred moments, this dear and tender parent owned to me her repentance that she had not loved me enough; her jealousy even that my father should give his affection to any but herself: and in the most fond and beautiful words of affection and admonition, she bade me never to leave him; and to supply the place which she was quitting. With a clear conscience, and a heart inexpressibly thankful, I think I can say that I fulfilled those dying commands, and that until his last hour, my dearest father never had to complain that his daughter's love and fidelity failed him.

And it is since I knew him entirely, for during my mother's life he never quite opened himself to me,

since I knew the value and splendour of that affection, which he bestowed upon me, that I have come to understand and pardon what, I own, used to anger me in my mother's life-time, her jealousy respecting her husband's love. 'T was a gift so precious, that no wonder she who had it, was for keeping it all, and could part with none of it, even to her daughter.

Though I never heard my father use a rough word, 't was extraordinary with how much awe his people regarded him; and the servants on our plantation, both those assigned from England and the purchased negroes, obeyed him with an eagerness such as the most severe task-masters round about us could never get from their people. He was never familiar though perfectly simple and natural; he was the same with the meanest man as with the greatest, and as courteous to a black slave-girl as to the governor's wife. No one ever thought of taking a liberty with him: (except once a tipsy gentleman from York, and I am bound to own that my papa never forgave him:) he set the humblest people at once on their ease with him, and brought down the most arrogant by a grave satiric way, which made persons exceedingly afraid of him. His courtesy was not put on like a Sunday suit, and laid by when the company went away, it was always the same, as he was always dressed the same whether for a dinner by ourselves or for a great entertainment. They say he liked to be the first in his company; but what company was there in which he would not be first? When I went to Europe for my education; and we passed a winter at London, with my half-brother, my Lord Castlewood and his second Lady, I saw at her Majesty's Court some of the most famous gentle-

men of those days; and I thought to myself, none of these are better than my papa: and the famous Lord Bolingbroke, who came to us from Dawley, said as much; and that the men of that time were not like those of his youth: — "Were your father, Madam," he said, "to go into the woods, the Indians would elect him Sachem;" and his lordship was pleased to call me Pocahontas.

I did not see our other relative, Bishop Tusher's Lady, of whom so much is said in my papa's memoirs — although my mamma went to visit her in the country. I have no pride, (as I showed by complying with my mother's request, and marrying a gentleman who was but the younger son of a Suffolk Baronet) yet I own to *a decent respect* for my name, and wonder how one, who ever bore it, should change it for that of Mrs. *Thomas Tusher*. I pass over as odious and unworthy of credit those reports (which I heard in Europe, and was then too young to understand), how this person, having *left her family*, and fled to Paris; out of jealousy of the Pretender, betrayed his secrets to my Lord Stair, King George's Ambassador, and nearly caused the Prince's death there; how she came to England and married this Mr. Tusher; and became a great favourite of King George the Second, by whom Mr. Tusher was made a Dean, and then a Bishop. I did not see the lady, who chose to remain *at her palace*, all the time we were in London: but after visiting her, my poor mamma said, she had lost all her good looks, and warned me not to set too much store by any such gifts which nature had bestowed upon me. She grew exceedingly stout; and I remember, my brother's wife, Lady Castlewood, saying, — "No wonder she became

a favourite, for the King likes them old and ugly, as his father did before him." On which papa said, — "All women were alike, that there was never one so beautiful as that one; and that we could forgive her everything but her beauty." And hereupon my mamma looked vexed, and my Lord Castlewood began to laugh: and I, of course, being a young creature, could not understand what was the subject of their conversation.

After the circumstances narrated in the third book of these Memoirs, my father and mother both went abroad, being advised by their friends to leave the country in consequence of the transactions which are recounted at the close of the second volume of the Memoirs. But my brother, hearing how the *future Bishop's lady* had quitted Castlewood and joined the Pretender at Paris, pursued him and would have killed him, Prince as he was; had not the Prince managed to make his escape. On his expedition to Scotland directly after, Castlewood was so enraged against him that he asked leave to serve as a volunteer, and join the Duke of Argyle's army in Scotland, which the Pretender never had the courage to face: — and thenceforth my Lord was quite reconciled to the present reigning family, from whom he hath even received promotion.

Mrs. Tusher was by this time as angry against the Pretender as any of her relations could be: and used to boast, as I have heard, that she not only brought back my Lord to the Church of England, but procured the English peerage for him, which the *junior branch* of our family at present enjoys. She was a great friend of Sir Robert Walpole, and would not rest until her husband slept at Lambeth: my papa

used laughing to say: however the Bishop died of apoplexy suddenly; and his wife erected a great monument over him; and the pair sleep under that stone with a canopy of marble clouds and angels above them, the first Mrs. Tusher lying sixty miles off at Castlewood.

But my Papa's genius and education are both greater than any a woman can be expected to have, and his adventures in Europe far more exciting than his life in this country, which was past in the tranquil offices of love and duty; and I shall say no more by way of introduction to his memoirs, nor keep my children from the perusal of a story which is much more interesting than that of their affectionate old mother,

RACHEL ESMOND WARRINGTON.

CASTLEWOOD, VIRGINIA,
November 3, 1778.

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THE HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND.

VOL. I.

BOOK THE FIRST.

The actors in the old tragedies, as we read, piped their iambics to a tune, speaking from under a mask, and wearing stilts and a great head-dress. 'Twas thought the dignity of the Tragic Muse required these appurtenances, and that she was not to move except to a measure and cadence. So Queen Medea slew her children to a slow music: and King Agamemnon perished in a dying fall (to use Mr. Dryden's words): the Chorus standing by in a set attitude, and rhythmically and decorously bewailing the fates of those great crowned persons. The Muse of History hath encumbered herself with ceremony as well as her Sister of the Theatre. She too wears the mask and the cothurnus and speaks to measure. She too, in our age, busies herself with the affairs only of kings; waiting on them, obsequiously and stately, as if she were but a mistress of Court ceremonies, and had nothing to do with the registering of the affairs of the common people. I have seen in his very old age and decrepitude the old French King Lewis the Fourteenth,

the type and model of king-hood — who never moved but to measure, who lived and died according to the laws of his Court-Marshal, persisting in enacting through life the part of Hero; and divested of poetry, this was but a little wrinkled old man, pock-marked, and with a great periwig and red heels to make him look tall, — a hero for a book if you like, or for a brass statue or a painted-ceiling, a god in a Roman shape, but what more than a man for Madame Maintenon, or the barber who shaved him, or Monsieur Fagon his surgeon? I wonder shall History ever put off her periwig and cease to be court-ridden? Shall we see something of France and England besides Versailles and Windsor? I saw Queen Anne at the latter place tearing down the Park slopes after her staghounds, and driving her one-horse chaise — a hot, red-faced woman, not in the least resembling that statue of her which turns its stone back upon Saint Paul's, and faces the coaches struggling up Ludgate Hill. She was neither better bred nor wiser than you and me, though we knelt to hand her a letter or a wash-hand-basin. Why shall History go on kneeling to the end of time? I am for having her rise up off her knees, and take a natural posture: not to be for ever performing cringes and congees like a Court-chamberlain, and shuffling backwards out of doors in the presence of the sovereign. In a word, I would have History familiar rather than heroic: and think that Mr. Hogarth and Mr. Fielding will give our children a much better idea of the manners of the present age in England, than the Court Gazette and the newspapers which we get thence.

There was a German officer of Webb's, with whom

we used to joke, and of whom a story (whereof I myself was the Author) was got to be believed in the army, that he was eldest son of the hereditary Grand Bootjack of the Empire, and heir to that honour of which his ancestors had been very proud, having been kicked for twenty generations by one imperial foot, as they drew the boot from the other. I have heard that the old Lord Castlewood, of part of whose family these present volumes are a chronicle, though he came of quite as good blood as the Stuarts whom he served and who as regards mere lineage are no better than a dozen English and Scottish houses I could name), was prouder of his post about the Court than of his ancestral honours, and valued his dignity (as Lord of the Butteries and Groom of the King's Posset) so highly, that he cheerfully ruined himself for the thankless and thriftless race who bestowed it. He pawned his plate for King Charles the First, mortgaged his property for the same cause, and lost the greater part of it by fines and sequestration: stood a siege of his castle by Ireton, where his brother Thomas capitulated (afterward making terms with the Commonwealth, for which the elder brother never forgave him), and where his second brother Edward, who had embraced the ecclesiastical profession, was slain on Castlewood tower, being engaged there both as preacher and artilleryman. This resolute old loyalist who was with the King whilst his house was thus being battered down, escaped abroad with his only son then a boy, to return and take a part in Worcester fight. On that fatal field Eustace Esmond was killed, and Castlewood fled from it once more into exile, and henceforward, and after the Restoration, never was away from the

Court of the monarch (for whose return we offer thanks in the Prayer Book) who sold his country and who took bribes of the French king.

What spectacle is more august than that of a great king in exile? Who is more worthy of respect than a brave man in misfortune? Mr. Addison has painted such a figure in his noble piece of Cato. But suppose fugitive Cato fuddling himself at a tavern with a wench on each knee, a dozen faithful and tipsy companions of defeat, and a landlord calling out for his bill; and the dignity of misfortune is straightway lost. The Historical Muse turns away shamefaced from the vulgar scene, and closes the door — on which the exile's unpaid drink is scored up — upon him and his pots and his pipes, and the tavern-chorus which he and his friends are singing. Such a man as Charles should have had an Ostade or Mieris to paint him. Your Knellers and Le Bruns only deal in clumsy and impossible allegories: and it hath always seemed to me blasphemy to claim Olympus for such a winedrabbled divinity as that.

About the King's follower the Viscount Castlewood — orphan of his son, ruined by his fidelity, bearing many wounds and marks of bravery, old and in exile, his kinsmen I suppose should be silent; nor if this patriarch fell down in his cups, call fie upon him, and fetch passers-by to laugh at his red face and white hairs. What! does a stream rush out of a mountain free and pure, to roll through fair pastures, to feed and throw out bright tributaries, and to end in a village gutter? Lives that have noble commencements have often no better endings; it is not without a kind of awe and reverence that an observer should speculate upon such

careers as he traces the course of them. I have seen too much of success in life to take off my hat and huzza to it, as it passes in its gilt coach: and would do my little part with my neighbours on foot that they should not gape with too much wonder, nor applaud too loudly. Is it the Lord Mayor going in state to mince-pies and the Mansion House? Is it poor Jack of Newgate's procession, with the sheriff and javelin-men, conducting him on his last journey to Tyburn? I look into my heart and think I am as good as my Lord Mayor, and know I am as bad as Tyburn Jack. Give me a chain and red gown and a pudding before me, and I could play the part of Alderman very well, and sentence Jack after dinner. Starve me, keep me from books and honest people, educate me to love dice, gin, and pleasure, and put me on Hounslow Heath, with a purse before me and I will take it. "And I shall be deservedly hanged," say you, wishing to put an end to this prosing. I don't say no. I can't but accept the world as I find it, including a rope's end, as long as it is in fashion.

CHAPTER I.

An account of the Family of Esmond of Castlewood Hall.

When Francis, fourth Viscount Castlewood, came to his title, and presently after to take possession of his house of Castlewood, county Hants, in the year 1691, almost the only tenant of the place besides the domestics was a lad of twelve years of age, of whom no one seemed to take any note until my Lady Viscountess lighted upon him, going over the house, with the house-keeper on the day of her arrival. The boy was in the room known as the book-room, or yellow gallery, where the portraits of the family used to hang, that fine piece among others of Sir Antonio Van Dyck of George, second Viscount, and that by Mr. Dobson of my lord the third Viscount, just deceased, which it seems his lady and widow did not think fit to carry away, when she sent for and carried off to her house at Chelsea, near to London, the picture of herself by Sir Peter Lely, in which her ladyship was represented as a huntress of Diana's court.

The new and fair lady of Castlewood found the sad lonely little occupant of this gallery busy over his great book, which he laid down when he was aware that a stranger was at hand. And, knowing who that person must be, the lad stood up and bowed before her, performing a shy obeisance to the mistress of his house.

She stretched out her hand — indeed when was it that that hand would not stretch out to do an act of kindness, or to protect grief and ill-fortune? "And this is our kinsman," she said; "and what is your name, kinsman?"

"My name is Henry Esmond," said the lad, looking up at her in a sort of delight and wonder, for she had come upon him as a *Dea certè*, and appeared the most charming object he had ever looked on. Her golden hair was shining in the gold of the sun; her complexion was of a dazzling bloom; her lips smiling, and her eyes beaming with a kindness which made Harry Esmond's heart to beat with surprise.

"His name is Henry Esmond, sure enough, my lady," says Mrs. Worksop the house-keeper (an old tyrant whom Henry Esmond plagued more than he hated), and the old gentlewoman looked significantly towards the late lord's picture, as it now is in the family, noble and severe-looking, with his hand on his sword, and his order on his cloak, which he had from the Emperor during the war on the Danube against the Turk.

Seeing the great and undeniable likeness between this portrait and the lad, the new Viscountess, who had still hold of the boy's hand as she looked at the picture, blushed and dropped the hand quickly, and walked down the gallery, followed by Mrs. Worksop.

When the lady came back, Harry Esmond stood exactly in the same spot, and with his hand as it had fallen when he dropped it on his black coat.

Her heart melted I suppose (indeed she hath since

owned as much) at the notion that she should do anything unkind to any mortal, great or small; for when she returned, she had sent away the housekeeper upon an errand by the door at the farther end of the gallery; and, coming back to the lad, with a look of infinite pity and tenderness in her eyes, she took his hand again, placing her other fair hand on his head, and saying some words to him, which were so kind and said in a voice so sweet, that the boy, who had never looked upon so much beauty before, felt as if the touch of a superior being or angel smote him down to the ground, and kissed the fair protecting hand as he knelt on one knee. To the very last hour of his life, Esmond remembered the lady as she then spoke and looked, the rings on her fair hands, the very scent of her robe, the beam of her eyes lighting up with surprise and kindness, her lips blooming in a smile, the sun making a golden halo round her hair.

As the boy was yet in this attitude of humility, enters behind him a portly gentleman, with a little girl of four years old in his hand. The gentleman burst into a great laugh at the lady and her adorer, with his little queer figure, his sallow face, and long, black hair. The lady blushed, and seemed to deprecate his ridicule by a look of appeal to her husband, for it was my Lord Viscount who now arrived, and whom the lad knew, having once before seen him in the late lord's lifetime.

"So this is the little priest!" says my lord, looking down at the lad; "welcome, kinsman."

"He is saying his prayers to mamma," says the little girl, who came up to her papa's knee; and my

lord burst out into another great laugh at this, and kinsman Henry looked very silly. He invented a half-dozen of speeches in reply, but 't was months afterwards, when he thought of this adventure: as it was, he had never a word in answer.

"*Le pauvre enfant, il n'a que nous*," says the lady, looking to her lord; and the boy, who understood her, though doubtless she thought otherwise, thanked her with all his heart for her kind speech.

"And he shan't want for friends here:" says my lord, in a kind voice, "shall he, little Trix?"

The little girl, whose name was Beatrix, and whom her papa called by this diminutive, looked at Henry Esmond solemnly, with a pair of large eyes, and then a smile shone over her face, which was as beautiful as that of a cherub, and she came up and put out a little hand to him. A keen and delightful pang of gratitude, happiness, affection, filled the orphan child's heart, as he received from the protectors, whom Heaven had sent to him, these touching words, and tokens of friendliness and kindness. But an hour since he had felt quite alone in the world: when he heard the great peal of bells from Castlewood church ringing that morning to welcome the arrival of the new lord and lady; it had rung only terror and anxiety to him, for he knew not how the new owner would deal with him; and those to whom he formerly looked for protection were forgotten or dead. Pride and doubt too had kept him within doors; when the Vicar and the people of the village, and the servants of the house, had gone out to welcome my Lord Castlewood — for Henry Esmond was no servant, though a dependent; no relative,

though he bore the name and inherited the blood of the house; and in the midst of the noise and acclamations attending the arrival of the new lord, (for whom you may be sure a feast was got ready, and guns were fired, and tenants and domestics huzza'd when his carriage approached and rolled into the court-yard of the hall,) no one ever took any notice of young Harry Esmond, who sate unobserved and alone in the book-room, until the afternoon of that day, when his new friends found him.

When my lord and lady were going away thence, the little girl, still holding her kinsman by the hand, bade him to come too. "Thou wilt always forsake an old friend for a new one, Trix," says her father to her good-naturedly; and went into the gallery, giving an arm to his lady. They passed thence through the music-gallery, long since dismantled, and Queen Elizabeth's rooms in the clock-tower, and out into the terrace, where was a fine prospect of sunset, and the great darkling woods with a cloud of rooks returning; and the plain and river with Castlewood village beyond, and purple hills beautiful to look at — and the little heir of Castlewood, a child of two years old, was already here on the terrace in his nurse's arms, from whom he ran across the grass instantly he perceived his mother, and came to her.

"If thou canst not be happy here," says my lord, looking round at the scene, "thou art hard to please, Rachel."

"I am happy where you are," she said, "but we were happiest of all at Walcote Forest." Then my lord began to describe what was before them to his wife, and what indeed little Harry knew better than

he — viz. the history of the house: how by yonder gate the page ran away with the heiress of Castlewood, by which the estate came into the present family, how the Roundheads attacked the clock-tower, which my lord's father was slain in defending. "I was but two years old then," says he, "but take forty-six from ninety, and how old shall I be, kinsman Harry?"

"Thirty," says his wife, with a laugh.

"A great deal too old for you, Rachel," answers my lord, looking fondly down at her. Indeed she seemed to be a girl; and was at that time scarce twenty years old.

"You know, Frank, I will do anything to please you," says she, "and I promise you I will grow older every day."

"You mustn't call papa, Frank; you must call papa my lord, now," says Miss Beatrix, with a toss of her little head; at which the mother smiled, and the good-natured father laughed, and the little, trotting boy laughed, not knowing why — but because he was happy no doubt — as every one seemed to be there. How those trivial incidents and words, the landscape and sunshine, and the group of people smiling and talking, remain fixed on the memory!

As the sun was setting, the little heir was sent in the arms of his nurse to bed, whither he went howling; but little Trix was promised to sit to supper that night — "and you will come too, kinsman, won't you?" she said.

Harry Esmond blushed: "I — I have supper with Mrs. Worksop," says he.

"D — n it," says my lord, "thou shalt sup with

us, Harry, to-night. Shan't refuse a lady, shall he, Trix?" — and they all wondered at Harry's performance as a trencher-man; in which character the poor boy acquitted himself very remarkably, for the truth is he had no dinner, nobody thinking of him in the bustle which the house was in, during the preparations antecedent to the new lord's arrival.

"No dinner! poor dear child!" says my lady, heaping up his plate with meat, and my lord filling a bumper for him, bade him call a health; on which Master Harry, crying "The King," tossed off the wine. My lord was ready to drink that, and most other toasts, indeed only too readily. He would not hear of Doctor Tusher (the Vicar of Castlewood, who came to supper) going away when the sweetmeats were brought; he had not had a chaplain long enough, he said, to be tired of him: so his reverence kept my lord company for some hours over a pipe and a punch-bowl; and went away home with rather a reeling gait, and declaring a dozen of times, that his lordship's affability surpassed every kindness he had ever had from his lordship's gracious family.

As for young Esmond, when he got to his little chamber, it was with a heart full of surprise and gratitude towards the new friends whom this happy day had brought him. He was up and watching long before the house was astir, longing to see that fair lady and her children — that kind protector and patron; and only fearful lest their welcome of the past night, should in any way be withdrawn or altered. But presently little Beatrix came out into the garden; and her mother followed, who greeted Harry as kindly as before. He told her at greater length the histories of

the house (which he had been taught in the old lord's time), and to which she listened with great interest; and then he told her with respect to the night before, that he understood French; and thanked her for her protection.

"Do you?" says she, with a blush; "then, Sir, you shall teach me and Beatrix." And she asked him many more questions regarding himself, which had best be told more fully and explicitly than in those brief replies which the lad made to his mistress's questions.

CHAPTER II.

Relates how Francis, fourth Viscount, arrives at Castlewood.

'TIS known that the name of Esmond and the estate of Castlewood, com. Hants, came into possession of the present family through Dorothea, daughter and heiress of Edward, Earl and Marquis of Esmond, and Lord of Castlewood, which lady married, 23 Eliz., Henry Poyns, gent.; the said Henry being then a page in the household of her father. Francis, son and heir of the above Henry and Dorothea, who took the maternal name which the family hath borne subsequently, was made Knight and Baronet by King James the First; and being of a military disposition, remained long in Germany with the Elector Palatine, in whose service Sir Francis incurred both expense and danger, lending large sums of money to that unfortunate Prince; and receiving many wounds in the battles against the Imperialists, in which Sir Francis engaged.

On his return home Sir Francis was rewarded for his services and many sacrifices, by his late Majesty James the First, who graciously conferred upon this tried servant the post of Warden of the Butteries, and Groom of the King's Posset, which high and confidential office he filled in that king's, and his unhappy successor's, reign.

His age and many wounds and infirmities, obliged Sir Francis to perform much of his duty by deputy; and his son, Sir George Esmond, knight and banneret,

first as his father's lieutenant, and afterwards as inheritor of his father's title and dignity, performed this office during almost the whole of the reign of King Charles the First, and his two sons who succeeded him.

Sir George Esmond married rather beneath the rank that a person of his name and honour might aspire to, the daughter of Thomas Topham of the city of London, Alderman and Goldsmith, who taking the Parliamentary side in the troubles then commencing, disappointed Sir Goorge of the property which he expected at the demise of his father-in-law, who devised his money to his second daughter, Barbara, a spinster.

Sir George Esmond, on his part, was conspicuous for his attachment and loyalty to the Royal cause and person, and the King being at Oxford, in 1642, Sir George, with the consent of his father, then very aged and infirm, and residing at his house of Castlewood, melted the whole of the family plate for his Majesty's service.

For this and other sacrifices and merits, his Majesty, by patent under the Privy Seal, dated Oxford, Jan., 1643, was pleased to advance Sir Francis Esmond to the dignity of Viscount Castlewood, of Shandon, in Ireland: and the Viscount's estate being much impoverished by loans to the King, which in those troublesome times his Majesty could not repay, a grant of land in the plantations of Virginia was given to the Lord Viscount; part of which land is in possession of descendants of his family to the present day.

The first Viscount Castlewood died full of years, and within a few months after he had been advanced to his honours. He was succeeded by his eldest son,

CHAPTER II.

Relates how Francis, fourth Viscount, arrives at Castlewood.

'Tis known that the name of Esmond and the estate of Castlewood, com. Hants, came into possession of the present family through Dorothea, daughter and heiress of Edward, Earl and Marquis of Esmond, and Lord of Castlewood, which lady married, 23 Eliz., Henry Poyns, gent.; the said Henry being then a page in the household of her father. Francis, son and heir of the above Henry and Dorothea, who took the maternal name which the family hath borne subsequently, was made Knight and Baronet by King James the First; and being of a military disposition, remained long in Germany with the Elector Palatine, in whose service Sir Francis incurred both expense and danger, lending large sums of money to that unfortunate Prince; and receiving many wounds in the battles against the Imperialists, in which Sir Francis engaged.

On his return home Sir Francis was rewarded for his services and many sacrifices, by his late Majesty James the First, who graciously conferred upon this tried servant the post of Warden of the Butteries, and Groom of the King's Posset, which high and confidential office he filled in that king's, and his unhappy successor's, reign.

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The first Viscount Castlewood died full of years, and within a few months after he had been advanced to his honours. He was succeeded by his eldest son,

the before-named George; and left issue besides, Thomas, a colonel in the King's army, that afterward joined the Usurper's government; and Francis, in holy orders, who was slain whilst defending the house of Castlewood against the Parliament, anno 1647.

George Lord Castlewood (the second Viscount) of King Charles the First's time, had no male issue save his one son Eustace Esmond, who was killed, with half of the Castlewood men beside him, at Worcester fight. The lands about Castlewood were sold and apportioned to the Commonwealth men; Castlewood being concerned in almost all of the plots against the Protector, after the death of the King, and up to King Charles the Second's restoration. My Lord followed that king's court about in its exile, having ruined himself in its service. He had but one daughter, who was of no great comfort to her father; for misfortune had not taught those exiles sobriety of life; and it is said that the Duke of York and his brother the King both quarrelled about Isabel Esmond. She was maid of honour to the Queen Henrietta Maria; she early joined the Roman Church; her father, a weak man, following her not long after at Breda.

On the death of Eustace Esmond at Worcester, Thomas Esmond, nephew to my Lord Castlewood, and then a stripling, became heir to the title. His father had taken the Parliament side in the quarrels, and so had been estranged from the chief of his house; and my Lord Castlewood was at first so much enraged to think that his title (albeit little more than an empty one now) should pass to a rascally Roundhead, that he would have married again, and indeed proposed to do so to a vintner's daughter at Bruges, to whom his

lordship owed a score for lodging when the King was there, but for fear of the laughter of the Court, and the anger of his daughter, of whom he stood in awe; for she was in temper as imperious and violent as my lord, who was much enfeebled by wounds and drinking, was weak.

Lord Castlewood would have had a match between this daughter Isabel and her cousin, the son of that Francis Esmond who was killed at Castlewood siege. And the lady, it was said, took a fancy to the young man, who was her junior by several years (which circumstance she did not consider to be a fault in him); but having paid his court, and being admitted to the intimacy of the house, he suddenly flung up his suit, when it seemed to be pretty prosperous, without giving a pretext for his behaviour. His friends rallied him at what they laughingly chose to call his infidelity. Jack Churchill, Frank Esmond's lieutenant in the Royal regiment of foot-guards, getting the company which Esmond vacated, when he left the Court and went to Tangier in a rage at discovering that his promotion depended on the complaisance of his elderly affianced bride. He and Churchill, who had been *condiscipuli* at St. Paul's School, had words about this matter; and Frank Esmond said to him, with an oath, "Jack, your sister may be so-and-so, but by Jove my wife shan't!" and swords were drawn, and blood drawn too, until friends separated them on this quarrel. Few men were so jealous about the point of honour in those days; and gentlemen of good birth and lineage thought a Royal blot was an ornament to their family coat. Frank Esmond retired in the sulks, first to Tangier, whence he returned after two years' service, settling on a small

property he had of his mother, near to Winchester, and became a country gentleman, and kept a pack of beagles, and never came to Court again in King Charles's time. But his uncle Castlewood was never reconciled to him; nor, for some time afterward, his cousin whom he had refused.

By places, pensions, bounties from France, and gifts from the King, whilst his daughter was in favour, Lord Castlewood, who had spent in the Royal service his youth and fortune, did not retrieve the latter quite, and never cared to visit Castlewood, or repair it, since the death of his son, but managed to keep a good house, and figure at Court, and to save a considerable sum of ready money.

And now, his heir and nephew, Thomas Esmond, began to bid for his uncle's favour. Thomas had served with the Emperor, and with the Dutch, when King Charles was compelled to lend troops to the States, and against them, when his Majesty made an alliance with the French King. In these campaigns Thomas Esmond was more remarked for duelling, brawling, vice and play, than for any conspicuous gallantry in the field, and came back to England, like many another English gentleman who has travelled, with a character by no means improved by his foreign experience. He had dissipated his small paternal inheritance of a younger brother's portion, and, as truth must be told, was no better than a hanger-on of ordinaries, and a brawler about Alsatia and the Friars, when he bethought him of a means of mending his fortune.

His cousin was now of more than middle age, and had nobody's word but her own for the beauty which

she said she once possessed. She was lean, and yellow, and long in the tooth; all the red and white in all the toyshops of London could not make a beauty of her — Mr. Killigrew called her the Sybil, the death's-head put up at the King's feast as a *memento mori*, &c. — in fine, a woman who might be easy of conquest, but whom only a very bold man would think of conquering. This bold man was Thomas Esmond. He had a fancy to my Lord Castlewood's savings, the amount of which rumour had very much exaggerated. Madame Isabel was said to have Royal jewels of great value; whereas poor Tom Esmond's last coat but one was in pawn.

My lord had at this time a fine house in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, nigh to the Duke's Theatre and the Portugal ambassador's chapel. Tom Esmond, who had frequented the one as long as he had money to spend among the actresses, now came to the church as assiduously. He looked so lean and shabby, that he passed without difficulty for a repentant sinner, and so, becoming converted, you may be sure took his uncle's priest for a director.

This charitable father reconciled him with the old lord his uncle, who a short time before would not speak to him, as Tom passed under my lord's coach window, his lordship going in state to his place at Court, while his nephew slunk by with his battered hat and feather, and the point of his rapier sticking out of the scabbard — to his two-penny ordinary in Bell Yard.

Thomas Esmond, after his reconciliation with his uncle, very soon began to grow sleek, and to show signs of the benefits of good living and clean linen.

He fasted rigorously twice a week to be sure; but he made amends on the other days: and, to show how great his appetite was, Mr. Wycherley said, he ended by swallowing that fly-blown rank old morsel, his cousin. There were endless jokes and lampoons about this marriage at court: but Tom rode thither in his uncle's coach now, called him father, and having won could afford to laugh. This marriage took place very shortly before King Charles died: whom the Viscount of Castlewood speedily followed.

The issue of this marriage was one son; whom the parents watched with an intense eagerness and care; but who, in spite of nurses and physicians, had only a brief existence. His tainted blood did not run very long in his poor feeble little body. Symptoms of evil broke out early on him; and, part from flattery, part superstition, nothing would satisfy my lord and lady, especially the latter, but having the poor little cripple touched by his Majesty at his church. They were ready to cry out miracle at first (the doctors and quacksalvers being constantly in attendance on the child, and experimenting on his poor little body with every conceivable nostrum) — but though there seemed from some reason a notable amelioration in the infant's health after his Majesty touched him, in a few weeks afterward the poor thing died — causing the lampooners of the Court to say that the King in expelling evil out of the infant of Tom Esmond and Isabella his wife, expelled the life out of it, which was nothing but corruption.

The mother's natural pang at losing this poor little child must have been increased when she thought of her rival Frank Esmond's wife, who was a favourite

of the whole Court, where my poor Lady Castlewood was neglected, and who had one child, a daughter, flourishing and beautiful, and was about to become a mother once more.

The Court, as I have heard, only laughed the more because the poor lady, who had pretty well passed the age when ladies are accustomed to have children, nevertheless determined not to give hope up, and even when she came to live at Castlewood, was constantly sending over to Hexton for the doctor, and announcing to her friends the arrival of an heir. This absurdity of hers was one amongst many others which the wags used to play upon. Indeed, to the last days of her life, my Lady Viscountess had the comfort of fancying herself beautiful, and persisted in blooming up to the very midst of winter, painting roses on her cheeks long after their natural season, and attiring herself like summer though her head was covered with snow.

Gentlemen who were about the Court of King Charles, and King James, have told the present writer a number of stories about this queer old lady, with which it 's not necessary that posterity should be entertained. She is said to have had great powers of invective; and if she fought with all her rivals in King James's favour, 'tis certain she must have had a vast number of quarrels on her hands. She was a woman of an intrepid spirit, and it appears pursued and rather fatigued his Majesty with her rights and her wrongs. Some say that the cause of her leaving Court was jealousy of Frank Esmond's wife: others that she was forced to retreat after a great battle which took place at Whitehall, between her ladyship and Lady Dorchester,

Tom Killigrew's daughter, whom the King delighted to honour, and in which that ill-favoured Esther got the better of our elderly Vashti. But her ladyship for her part always averred that it was her husband's quarrel, and not her own, which occasioned the banishment of the two into the country; and the cruel ingratitude of the Sovereign in giving away, out of the family, that place of Warden of the Butteries, and Groom of the King's Posset, which the two last Lords Castlewood had held so honourably, and which was now conferred upon a fellow of yesterday, and a hanger-on of that odious Dorchester creature, my Lord Bergamot;* "I never," said my lady, "could have come to see his Majesty's posset carried by any other hand than an Esmond. I should have dashed the salver out of Lord Bergamot's hand, had I met him." And those who knew her ladyship are aware that she was a person quite capable of performing this feat, had she not wisely kept out of the way.

Holding the purse-strings in her own control, to which, indeed, she liked to bring most persons who came near her, Lady Castlewood could command her husband's obedience, and so broke up her establishment at London; she had removed from Lincoln's-Inn-Fields to Chelsea, to a pretty new house she bought there; and brought her establishment, her maids, lap-dogs and gentlewomen, her priest, and his lordship her husband to Castlewood Hall, that she had never seen since she quitted it as a child with her father

* Lionel Tipton, created Baron Bergamot ann. 1686, Gentleman Usher of the Back Stairs, and afterwards appointed Warden of the Butteries and Groom of the King's Posset (on the decease of George, second Viscount Castlewood), accompanied his Majesty to St. Germain's, where he died without issue. No Groom of the Posset was appointed by the Prince of Orange, nor hath there been such an officer in any succeeding reign.

during the troubles of King Charles the First's reign. The walls were still open in the old house as they had been left by the shot of the Commonwealth-men. A part of the mansion was restored and furbished up with the plate, hangings, and furniture, brought from the house in London. My lady meant to have a triumphal entry into Castlewood village, and expected the people to cheer as she drove over the Green in her great coach, my lord beside her, her gentlewomen, lap-dogs, and cockatoos, on the opposite seat, six horses to her carriage, and servants armed and mounted, following it and preceding it. But 'twas in the height of the No Popery cry; the folks in the village and the neighbouring town were scared by the sight of her ladyship's painted face and eyelids, as she bobbed her head out of the coach-window, meaning no doubt to be very gracious; and one old woman said, 'Lady Isabel! lord-a-mercy, it 's Lady Jezebel!' a name by which the enemies of the right honourable Viscountess were afterwards in the habit of designating her. The country was then in a great no-popery fervour, her ladyship's known conversion, and her husband's, the priest in her train, and the service performed at the chapel of Castlewood, (though the chapel had been built for that worship before any other was heard of in the country, and though the service was performed in the most quiet manner,) got her no favour at first in the county or village. By far the greater part of the estate of Castlewood had been confiscated, and been parcelled out to Common-wealth men. One or two of these old Cromwellian soldiers were still alive in the village, and looked grimly at first upon my Lady Viscountess, when she came to dwell there.

She appeared at the Hexton Assembly, bringing her lord after her, scaring the country folks with the splendour of her diamonds, which she always wore in public. They said she wore them in private, too, and slept with them round her neck; though the writer can pledge his word that this was a calumny. "If she were to take them off," my Lady Sark said, "Tom Esmond, her husband, would run away with them and pawn them." 'Twas another calumny. My Lady Sark was also an exile from Court, and there had been war between the two ladies before.

The village people began to be reconciled presently to their lady, who was generous and kind, though fantastic and haughty, in her ways; and whose praises Dr. Tusher, the Vicar, sounded loudly amongst his flock. As for my lord, he gave no great trouble, being considered scarce more than an appendage to my lady, who, as daughter of the old lords of Castlewood, and possessor of vast wealth, as the country folks said (though indeed nine-tenths of it existed but in rumour), was looked upon as the real queen of the Castle, and mistress of all it contained.

CHAPTER III.

Whither in the time of Thomas, third Viscount, I had preceded him, as page to Isabella.

Coming up to London again some short time after this retreat, the Lord Castlewood dispatched a retainer of his to a little cottage in the village of Ealing, near to London, where for some time had dwelt an old French refugee, by name Mr. Pastoureau, one of those whom the persecution of the Huguenots by the French king had brought over to this country. With this old man lived a little lad, who went by the name of Henry Thomas. He remembered to have lived in another place a short time before, near to London too, amongst looms and spinning-wheels, and a great deal of psalm-singing and church-going, and a whole colony of Frenchmen.

There he had a dear, dear friend, who died, and whom he called Aunt. She used to visit him in his dreams sometimes; and her face, though it was homely, was a thousand times dearer to him than that of Mrs. Pastoureau, Bon Papa Pastoureau's new wife, who came to live with him after aunt went away. And there, at Spittlefields, as it used to be called, lived Uncle George, who was a weaver too, but used to tell Harry that he was a little gentleman, and that his father was a captain, and his mother an angel.

When he said so, Bon Papa used to look up from the loom, where he was embroidering beautiful silk

flowers, and say, "Angel! she belongs to the Babylonish scarlet woman." Bon Papa was always talking of the scarlet woman. He had a little room where he always used to preach and sing hymns out of his great old nose. Little Harry did not like the preaching; he liked better the fine stories which aunt used to tell him. Bon Papa's wife never told him pretty stories; she quarrelled with uncle George, and he went away.

After this Harry's Bon Papa, and his wife and two children of her own that she brought with her, came to live at Ealing. The new wife gave her children the best of everything, and Harry many a whipping, he knew not why. Besides blows, he got ill-names from her, which need not beset down here, for the sake of old Mr. Pastoureau, who was still kind sometimes. The unhappiness of those days is long forgiven, though they cast a shade of melancholy over the child's youth, which will accompany him, no doubt, to the end of his days: as those tender twigs are bent the trees grow afterward; and he, at least, who has suffered as a child, and is not quite perverted in that early school of unhappiness, learns to be gentle and long-suffering with little children.

Harry was very glad when a gentleman dressed in black, on horseback, with a mounted servant behind him, came to fetch him away from Ealing. The noverca, or unjust step-mother, who had neglected him for her own two children, gave him supper enough the night before he went away, and plenty in the morning. She did not beat him once, and told the children to keep their hands off him. One was a girl, and Harry never could bear to strike a girl, and the other was a boy, whom he could easily have beat, but he always

cried out, when Mrs. Pastoureau came sailing to the rescue with arms like a flail. She only washed Harry's face the day he went away; nor ever so much as once boxed his ears. She whimpered rather when the gentleman in black came for the boy; and old Mr. Pastoureau, as he gave the child his blessing, scowled over his shoulder at the strange gentleman, and grumbled out something about Babylon and the scarlet lady. He was grown quite old, like a child almost. Mrs. Pastoureau used to wipe his nose as she did to the children. She was a great, big, handsome young woman; but though she pretended to cry, Harry thought 'twas only a sham, and sprung quite delighted upon the horse upon which the lacquey helped him.

He was a Frenchman, his name was Blaise. The child could talk to him in his own language perfectly well: he knew it better than English indeed, having lived hitherto chiefly among French people: and being called the little Frenchman by other boys on Ealing Green. He soon learnt to speak English perfectly, and to forget some of his French: children forget easily. Some earlier and fainter recollections the child had, of a different country; and a town with tall white houses; and a ship. But these were quite indistinct in the boy's mind, as indeed, the memory of Ealing soon became, at least of much that he suffered there.

The lacquey before whom he rode was very lively and voluble, and informed the boy that the gentleman riding before him was my lord's Chaplain, Father Holt, that he was now to be called Master Harry Esmond, that my Lord Viscount Castlewood was his *parrain*, that he was to live at the great house of Castlewood, in the province of —shire, where he would see Ma-

dame the Viscountess, who was a grand lady, and so, seated on a cloth before Blaise's saddle, Harry Esmond was brought to London, and to a fine square called Covent Garden, near to which his patron lodged.

Mr. Holt the priest took the child by the hand, and brought him to this nobleman, a grand languid nobleman in a great cap and flowered morning-gown, sucking oranges. He patted Harry on the head and gave him an orange.

"*C'est bien ça,*" he said to the priest after eyeing the child, and the gentleman in black shrugged his shoulders.

Let Blaise take him out for a holiday, and out for a holiday the boy and the valet went. Harry went jumping along, he was glad enough to go.

He will remember to his life's end the delights of those days. He was taken to see a play by Monsieur Blaise, in a house a thousand times greater and finer than the booth at Ealing Fair — and on the next happy day they took water on the river, and Harry saw London Bridge, with the houses and booksellers' shops thereon, looking like a street, and the Tower of London, with the armour, and the great lions and bears in the moats — all under company of Monsieur Blaise.

Presently, of an early morning, all the party set forth for the country, namely, my Lord Viscount and the other gentleman; Monsieur Blaise, and Harry on a pillion behind him, and two or three men with pistols and leading the baggage-horses. And all along the road the Frenchman told little Harry stories of brigands, which made the child's hair stand on end, and terrified him, so that at the great gloomy inn on

the road where they lay, he besought to be allowed to sleep in a room with one of the servants, and was compassionated by Mr. Holt, the gentleman who travelled with my lord, and who gave the child a little bed in his chamber.

His artless talk and answers very likely inclined this gentleman in the boy's favour, for next day Mr. Holt said Harry should ride behind him, and not with the French lacquey; and all along the journey put a thousand questions to the child — as to his foster-brother and relations at Ealing; what his old grandfather had taught him; what languages he knew; whether he could read and write, and sing, and so forth. And Mr. Holt found that Harry could read and write, and possessed the two languages of French and English very well, and when he asked Harry about singing, the lad broke out with a hymn to the tune of Dr. Martin Luther, which set Mr. Holt a-laughing; and even caused his *grand parrain* in the laced hat and periwig to laugh too, when Holt told him what the child was singing. For it appeared that Dr. Martin Luther's hymns were not sung in the churches Mr. Holt preached at.

"You must never sing that song any more, do you hear, little mannikin?" says my Lord Viscount, holding up a finger.

"But we will try and teach you a better, Harry," Mr. Holt said, and the child answered, for he was a docile child, and of an affectionate nature, "that he loved pretty songs, and would try and learn anything the gentleman would tell him." That day he so pleased the gentlemen by his talk, that they had him to dine with them at the inn, and encouraged him in his

prattle; and Monsieur Blaise, with whom he rode and dined the day before, waited upon him now.

"'Tis well, 'tis well," said Blaise, that night (in his own language) when they lay again at an inn. "We are a little lord here, we are a little lord now: we shall see what we are when we come to Castlewood where my lady is."

"When shall we come to Castlewood, Monsieur Blaise?" says Harry.

"*Parbleu!* my lord does not press himself," Blaise says, with a grin; and, indeed, it seemed as if his lordship was not in a great hurry, for he spent three days on that journey which Harry Esmond hath often since ridden in a dozen hours. For the last two of the days, Harry rode with the priest, who was so kind to him, that the child had grown to be quite fond and familiar with him by the journey's end, and had scarce a thought in his little heart which by that time he had not confided to his new friend.

At length on the third day, at evening, they came to a village standing on a green with elms round it, very pretty to look at; and the people there all took off their hats, and made curtsies to my Lord Viscount, who bowed to them all languidly; and there was one portly person that wore a cassock and a broad-leafed hat, who bowed lower than any one — and with this one both my lord and Mr. Holt had a few words. "This, Harry, is Castlewood church," says Mr. Holt, "and this is the pillar thereof, learned Doctor Tusher. Take off your hat, sirrah, and salute Doctor Tusher."

"Come up to supper, Doctor," says my lord; at which the Doctor made another low bow, and the

party moved on towards a grand house that was before them, with many grey towers and vanes on them, and windows flaming in the sunshine; and a great army of rooks, wheeling over their heads, made for the woods behind the house, as Harry saw; and Mr. Holt told him that they lived at Castlewood too.

They came to the house, and passed under an arch into a court-yard, with a fountain in the centre, where many men came and held my lord's stirrup as he descended; and paid great respect to Mr. Holt likewise. And the child thought that the servants looked at him curiously and smiled to one another — and he recalled what Blaise had said to him when they were in London, and Harry had spoken about his godpapa, when the Frenchman said, "*Parbleu*, one sees well that my lord is your godfather;" words whereof the poor lad did not know the meaning then: though he apprehended the truth in a very short time afterwards, and learned it and thought of it with no small feeling of shame.

Taking Harry by the hand as soon as they were both descended from their horses, Mr. Holt led him across the court, and under a low door to rooms on a level with the ground; one of which Father Holt said was to be the boy's chamber, the other on the other side of the passage being the Father's own; and as soon as the little man's face was washed, and the Father's own dress arranged, Harry's guide took him once more to the door by which my lord had entered the hall, and up a stair, and through an ante-room to my lady's drawing-room — an apartment than which Harry thought he had never seen anything more grand — no not in the Tower of London which he

had just visited. Indeed the chamber was richly ornamented in the manner of Queen Elizabeth's time, with great stained windows at either end, and hangings of tapestry, which the sun shining through the coloured glass painted of a thousand hues; and here in state, by the fire, sate a lady to whom the priest took up Harry, who was indeed amazed by her appearance.

My Lady Viscountess's face was daubed with white and red up to the eyes, to which the paint gave an unearthly glare: she had a tower of lace on her head, under which was a bush of black curls — borrowed curls — so that no wonder little Harry Esmond was scared when he was first presented to her — the kind priest acting as master of the ceremonies at that solemn introduction — and he stared at her with eyes almost as great as her own, as he had stared at the player-woman who acted the wicked tragedy-queen, when the players came down to Ealing Fair. She sate in a great chair by the fire-corner; in her lap was a spaniel dog that barked furiously; on a little table by her was her ladyship's snuff-box and her sugar-plum box. She wore a dress of black velvet, and a petticoat of flame-coloured brocade. She had as many rings on her fingers as the old woman of Banbury Cross; and pretty small feet which she was fond of showing, with great gold clocks to her stockings, and white pantofles with red heels: and an odour of musk was shook out of her garments whenever she moved or quitted the room, leaning on her tortoiseshell stick, little Fury barking at her heels.

Mrs. Tusher, the parson's wife, was with my lady She had been waiting-woman to her ladyship in the

late lord's time, and having her soul in that business, took naturally to it when the Viscountess of Castlewood returned to inhabit her father's house.

"I present to your ladyship your kinsman and little page of honour, Master Henry Esmond," Mr. Holt said, bowing lowly, with a sort of comical humility. "Make a pretty bow to my lady, Monsieur; and then another little bow, not so low, to Madame Tusher — the fair priestess of Castlewood."

"Where I have lived and hope to die, Sir," says Madame Tusher, giving a hard glance at the brat, and then at my lady.

Upon her the boy's whole attention was for a time directed. He could not keep his great eyes off from her. Since the Empress of Ealing he had seen nothing so awful.

"Does my appearance please you, little page?' asked the lady.

"He would be very hard to please if it didn't," cried Madame Tusher.

"Have done, you silly Maria," said Lady Castlewood.

"Where I'm attached, I'm attached, Madame — and I'd die rather than not say so."

"*Je meurs où je m' attache*," Mr. Holt said with a polite grin. "The ivy says so in the picture, and clings to the oak like a fond parasite as it is."

"Parricide! Sir!" cries Mrs. Tusher.

"Hush, Tusher — you are always bickering with Father Holt," cried my lady. "Come and kiss my hand, child:" and the oak held out a *branch* to little Harry Esmond, who took and dutifully kissed the

lean old hand, upon the gnarled knuckles of which there glittered a hundred rings.

"To kiss that hand would make many a pretty fellow happy!" cried Mrs. Tusher: on which my lady crying out, "Go, you foolish Tusher," and tapping her with her great fan, Tusher ran forward to seize her hand and kiss it. Fury arose and barked furiously at Tusher; and Father Holt looked on at this queer scene, with arch grave glances.

The awe exhibited by the little boy perhaps pleased the lady to whom this artless flattery was bestowed, for having gone down on his knee (as Father Holt had directed him, and the mode then was) and performed his obeisance, she said, "Page Esmond, my groom of the chamber will inform you what your duties are, when you wait upon my lord and me; and good Father Holt will instruct you as becomes a gentleman of our name. You will pay him obedience in everything, and I pray you may grow to be as learned, and as good as your tutor."

The lady seemed to have the greatest reverence for Mr. Holt, and to be more afraid of him than of anything else in the world. If she was ever so angry, a word, or look from Father Holt, made her calm: indeed he had a vast power of subjecting those who came near him; and, among the rest, his new pupil gave himself up with an entire confidence and attachment to the good Father, and became his willing slave almost from the first moment he saw him.

He put his small hand into the Father's as he walked away from his first presentation to his mistress, and asked many questions in his artless childish way. "Who is that other woman?" he asked. "She is fat

and round, she is more pretty than my Lady Castlewood."

"She is Madam Tusher, the parson's wife of Castlewood. She has a son of your age, but bigger than you."

"Why does she like so to kiss my lady's hand? It is not good to kiss."

"Tastes are different, little man. Madam Tusher is attached to my lady, having been her waiting-woman, before she was married, in the old lord's time. She married Doctor Tusher the Chaplain. The English household divines often marry the waiting-women."

"You will not marry the French woman, will you? I saw her laughing with Blaise in the buttery."

"I belong to a church that is older and better than the English church," Mr. Holt said (making a sign whereof Esmond did not then understand the meaning, across his breast and forehead); "in our church the clergy do not marry. You will understand these things better soon."

"Was not Saint Peter the head of your church? — Dr. Rabbits of Ealing told us so."

The Father said, "Yes he was."

"But Saint Peter was married, for we heard only last Sunday that his wife's mother lay sick of a fever." On which the father again laughed, and said he would understand this too better soon, and talked of other things, and took away Harry Esmond, and showed him the great old house which he had come to inhabit.

It stood on a rising green hill, with woods behind it, in which were rooks' nests where the birds at morning and returning home at evening made a great cawing. At the foot of the hill was a river with a

steep ancient bridge crossing it; and beyond that a large pleasant green flat, where the village of Castlewood stood and stands, with the church in the midst, the parsonage hard by it, the inn with the blacksmith's forge beside it, and the sign of the Three Castles on the elm. The London road stretched away towards the rising sun, and to the west were swelling hills and peaks behind which many a time Harry Esmond saw the same sun setting, that he now looks on thousands of miles away across the great ocean, — in a new Castlewood by another stream, that bears, like the new country of wandering Æneas, the fond names of the land of his youth.

The Hall of Castlewood was built with two courts, whereof one only, the fountain court, was now inhabited, the other having been battered down in the Cromwellian wars. In the fountain court, still in good repair, was the great hall, near to the kitchen and butteries. A dozen of living-rooms looking to the north, and communicating with the little chapel that faced eastwards and the buildings stretching from that to the main gate, and with the hall (which looked to the west) into the court now dismantled. This court had been the most magnificent of the two, until the Protector's cannon tore down one side of it before the place was taken and stormed. The besiegers entered at the terrace under the clocktower, slaying every man of the garrison, and at their head my lord's brother, Francis Esmond.

The Restoration did not bring enough money to the Lord Castlewood to restore this ruined part of his house; where were the morning parlours, above them the long music-gallery, and before which stretched

the garden terrace where, however, the flowers grew again, which the boots of the Roundheads had trodden in their assault, and which was restored without much cost, and only a little care, by both ladies who succeeded the second viscount in the government of this mansion. Round the terrace-garden was a low wall, with a wicket leading to the wooded height beyond, that is called Cromwell's battery to this day.

Young Harry Esmond learned the domestic part of his duty, which was easy enough, from the groom of her ladyship's chamber: serving the Countess, as the custom commonly was in his boyhood, as page, waiting at her chair, bringing her scented water and the silver basin after dinner — sitting on her carriage step on state occasions, or on public days introducing her company to her. This was chiefly of the Catholic gentry, of whom there were a pretty many in the country and neighbouring city; and who rode not seldom to Castlewood to partake of the hospitalities there. In the second year of their residence the company seemed especially to increase. My lord and my lady were seldom without visitors, in whose society it was curious to contrast the difference of behaviour between Father Holt, the director of the family, and Doctor Tusher, the rector of the parish, — Mr. Holt moving amongst the very highest as quite their equal, and as commanding them all; while poor Doctor Tusher, whose position was indeed a difficult one, having been Chaplain once to the Hall, and still to the Protestant servants there, seemed more like an usher than an equal, and always rose to go away after the first course.

Also there came in these times to Father Holt

many private visitors, whom after a little, Harry Esmond had little difficulty in recognising as ecclesiastics of the Father's persuasion: whatever their dresses (and they adopted all) might be. These were closeted with the Father constantly, and often came and rode away without paying their devoirs to my lord and lady — to the lady and lord rather — his lordship being little more than a cypher in the house, and entirely under his domineering partner. A little fowling, a little hunting, a great deal of sleep, and a long time at cards and table, carried through one day after another with his lordship. When meetings took place in this second year, which often would happen with closed doors, the page found my lord's sheet of paper scribbled over with dogs and horses, and 'twas said he had much ado to keep himself awake at these councils: the Countess ruling over them, and he acting as little more than her secretary.

Father Holt began speedily to be so much occupied with these meetings as rather to neglect the education of the little lad who so gladly put himself under the kind priest's orders. At first they read much and regularly, both in Latin and French; the Father, not neglecting in anything to impress his faith upon his pupil, but not forcing him violently, and treating him with a delicacy and kindness which surprised and attached the child, always more easily won by these methods than by any severe exercise of authority. And his delight in our walks was to tell Harry of the glories of his order, of its martyrs and heroes, of its brethren converting the heathen by myriads, traversing the desert, facing the stake, ruling the courts and councils, or braving the tortures of kings; so that Harry

Esmond thought that to belong to the Jesuits was the greatest prize of life and bravest end of ambition; the greatest career here, and in heaven the surest reward; and began to long for the day, not only when he should enter into the one church and receive his first communion, but when he might join that wonderful brotherhood, which was present throughout all the world, and which numbered the wisest, the bravest, the highest born, the most eloquent of men, among its members. Father Holt bade him keep his views secret, and to hide them as a great treasure which would escape him if it was revealed; and proud of this confidence and secret vested in him, the lad became fondly attached to the master who initiated him into a mystery so wonderful and awful. And when little Tom Tusher, his neighbour, came from school for his holiday, and said how he, too, was to be bred up for an English priest, and would get what he called an exhibition from his school, and then a college scholarship and fellowship, and then a good living — it tasked young Harry Esmond's powers of reticence not to say to his young companion, "Church! priesthood! fat living! My dear Tommy, do you call yours a church and a priesthood? What is a fat living compared to converting a hundred thousand heathens by a single sermon? What is a scholarship at Trinity by the side of a crown of martyrdom, with angels awaiting you as your head is taken off? Could your master at school sail over the Thames on his gown? Have you statues in your church that can bleed, speak, walk, and cry? My good Tommy, in dear Father Holt's church these things take place every day. You know Saint Philip of the Willows appeared to Lord

Castlewood and caused him to turn to the one true church. No saints ever come to you." And Harry Esmond, because of his promise to Father Holt, hiding away these treasures of faith from T. Tusher, delivered himself of them nevertheless simply to Father Holt, who stroked his head, smiled at him with his inscrutable look, and told him that he did well to meditate on these great things, and not to talk of them except under direction.

CHAPTER IV.

I am placed under a Popish priest, and bred to that Religion. — Viscountess Castlewood.

Had time enough been given and his childish inclinations been properly nurtured, Harry Esmond had been a Jesuit priest ere he was a dozen years older, and might have finished his days a martyr in China or a victim on Tower Hill: for in the few months they spent together at Castlewood, Mr. Holt obtained an entire mastery over the boy's intellect and affections; and had brought him to think, as indeed Father Holt thought with all his heart too, that no life was so noble, no death so desirable, as that which many brethren of his famous order were ready to undergo. By love, by a brightness of wit and good humour that charmed all, by an authority which he knew how to assume, by a mystery and silence about him which increased the child's reverence for him, he won Harry's absolute fealty, and would have kept it, doubtless, if schemes greater and more important than a poor little boy's admission into orders had not called him away.

After being at home for a few months in tranquillity, (if theirs might be called tranquillity, which was, in truth, a constant bickering,) my lord and lady left the country for London, taking their director with them: and his little pupil scarce ever shed more bitter tears in his life than he did for nights after the first parting

with his dear friend, as he lay in the lonely chamber next to that which the Father used to occupy. He and a few domestics were left as the only tenants of the great house: and though Harry sedulously did all the tasks which the Father set him, he had many hours unoccupied, and read in the library, and bewildered his little brains with the great books he found there.

After a while the little lad grew accustomed to the loneliness of the place; and, in after days remembered this part of his life as a period not unhappy. When the family was at London the whole of the establishment travelled thither with the exception of the porter, who was, moreover, brewer, gardener, and woodman, and his wife and children. These had their lodging in the gatehouse hard by, with a door into the court, and a window looking out on the Green was the Chaplain's room; and next to this a small chamber where Father Holt had his books, and Harry Esmond his sleeping closet. The side of the house facing the east had escaped the guns of the Cromwellians, whose battery was on the height facing the western court; so that his eastern end bore few marks of demolition, save in the chapel, where the painted windows surviving Edward the Sixth had been broke by the Commonwealth-men. In Father Holt's time little Harry Esmond acted as his familiar, and faithful little servitor; beating his clothes, folding his vestments, fetching his water from the well long before day-light, ready to run any where for the service of his beloved priest. When the Father was away, he locked his private chamber, but the room where the books were was left to little Harry, who but for the society of this gentle-

man was little less solitary when Lord Castlewood at home.

The French wit saith that a hero is none to his *valet-de-chambre*, and it required less quick eyes than my lady's little page was naturally endowed with, to see that she had many qualities by no means heroic, however much Mrs. Tusher might flatter and coax her. When Father Holt was not by, who exercised an entire authority over the pair, my lord and my lady quarrelled and abused each other so as to make the servants laugh, and to frighten the little page on duty. The poor boy trembled before his mistress, who called him by a hundred ugly names, who made nothing of boxing his ears and tilting the silver basin in his face which it was his business to present to her after dinner. She hath repaired by subsequent kindness to him, these severities, which it must be owned made his childhood very unhappy. She was but unhappy herself at this time, poor soul, and I suppose made her dependents lead her own sad life. I think my lord was as much afraid of her as her page was, and the only person of the household who mastered her was Mr. Holt. Harry was only too glad when the Father dined at table, and to slink away and prattle with him afterwards, or read with him, or walk with him. Luckily my Lady Viscountess did not rise till noon. Heaven help the poor waiting-woman who had charge of her toilet! I have often seen the poor wretch come out with red eyes from the closet, where those long and mysterious rites of her ladyship's dress were performed, and the backgammon-box locked up with a rap on Mrs. Tusher's fingers when she played ill or the game was going the wrong way.

Blessed be the king who introduced cards, and the kind inventors of piquet and cribbage, for they employed six hours at least of her ladyship's day, during which her family was pretty easy. Without this occupation my lady frequently declared she should die. Her dependents one after another relieved guard — 'twas rather a dangerous post to play with her ladyship — and took the cards turn about. Mr. Holt would sit with her at piquet during hours together, at which time she behaved herself properly, and as for Dr. Tusher, I believe he would have left a parishioner's dying bed, if summoned to play a rubber with his patroness at Castlewood. Sometimes, when they were pretty comfortable together, my lord took a hand. Besides these my lady had her faithful poor Tusher, and one, two, three gentlewomen whom Harry Esmond could recollect in his time. They could not bear that genteel service very long: one after another tried and failed at it. These and the house-keeper, and little Harry Esmond had a table of their own. Poor ladies! their life was far harder than the page's. He was sound asleep tucked up in his little bed, whilst they were sitting by her ladyship reading her to sleep, with the News Letter or the Grand Cyrus. My lady used to have boxes of new plays from London, and Harry was forbidden, under the pain of a whipping, to look into them. I am afraid he deserved the penalty pretty often, and got it sometimes. Father Holt applied it twice or thrice, when he caught the young scapegrace with a delightful wicked comedy of Mr. Shadwell's or Mr. Wycherley's under his pillow.

These, when he took any, were my lord's favourite reading. But he was averse to much study, and, as

his little page fancied, to much occupation of any sort.

It always seemed to young Harry Esmond that my lord treated him with more kindness when his lady was not present, and Lord Castlewood would take the lad sometimes on his little journeys a-hunting, or a-birding; he loved to play at cards and tric-trac with him, which games the boy learned to pleasure his lord; and was growing to like him better daily, showing a special pleasure if Father Holt gave a good report of him, patting him on the head, and promising that he would provide for the boy. However, in my lady's presence, my lord showed no such marks of kindness, and affected to treat the lad roughly, and rebuked him sharply for little faults — for which he, in a manner asked pardon of young Esmond when they were private, saying if he did not speak roughly, she would, and his tongue was not such a bad one as his lady's — a point whereof the boy, young as he was, was very well assured.

Great public events were happening all this while of which the simple young page took little count. But one day riding into the neighbouring town on the step of my lady's coach, his lordship and she, and Father Holt, being inside, a great mob of people came hooting and jeering round the coach, bawling out "The Bishops for ever!" "Down with the Pope!" "No Popery! no Popery! Jezebel, Jezebel!" so that my lord began to laugh, my lady's eyes to roll with anger, for she was as bold as a lioness, and feared nobody, whilst Mr. Holt, as Esmond saw from his place on the step, sank back with rather an alarmed face, crying out to her ladyship, "For God's sake, Madam, do not speak or

look out of window, sit still." But she did not obey this prudent injunction of the Father; she thrust her head out of the coach window, and screamed out to the coachman, "Flog your way through them, the brutes, James, and use your whip!"

The mob answered with a roaring jeer of laughter, and fresh cries of "Jezebel! Jezebel!" My lord only laughed the more: he was a languid gentleman: nothing seemed to excite him commonly, though I have seen him cheer and halloo the hounds very briskly, and his face (which was generally very yellow and calm) grow quite red and cheerful during a burst over the Downs after a hare, and laugh, and swear, and huzzah, at a cock-fight, of which sport he was very fond. And now, when the mob began to hoot his lady, he laughed with something of a mischievous look, as though he expected sport, and thought that she and they were a match.

James the coachman was more afraid of his mistress than the mob, probably, for he whipped on his horses as he was bidden, and the post-boy that rode with the first pair (my lady always went with her coach and six), gave a cut of his thong over the shoulders of one fellow who put his hand out towards the leading horse's rein.

It was a market day, and the country people were all assembled with their baskets of poultry, eggs, and such things; the postilion had no sooner lashed the man who would have taken hold of his horse, but a great cabbage camo whirling like a bomb-shell into the carriage, at which my lord laughed more, for it knocked my lady's fan out of her hand, and plumped

into Father Holt's stomach. Then came a shower of carrots and potatoes.

"For Heaven's sake be still," says Mr. Holt; "we are not ten paces from the Bell archway, where they can shut the gates on us, and keep out this canaille."

The little page was outside the coach on the step, and a fellow in the crowd aimed a potatoe at him, and hit him in the eye, at which the poor little wretch set up a shout; the man laughed, a great big saddler's apprentice of the town. "Ah! you d—d little yelling Popish bastard," he said, and stooped to pick up another; the crowd had gathered quite between the horses and in the Inn door by this time, and the coach was brought to a dead stand-still. My lord jumped as briskly as a boy out of the door on his side of the coach, squeezing little Harry behind it; had hold of the potatoe-thrower's collar in an instant, and the next moment the brute's heels were in the air and he fell on the stones with a thump.

"You hulking coward!" says he; "you pack of screaming blackguards. How dare you attack children, and insult women? Fling another shot at that carriage, you sneaking pigskin cobbler, and by the Lord, I'll send my rapier through you."

Some of the mob cried, "Huzza, my lord!" for they knew him, and the saddler's man was a known bruiser, near twice as big as my Lord Viscount.

"Make way, there," says he (he spoke in a high shrill voice, but with a great air of authority). "Make way, and let her ladyship's carriage pass." The men that were between the coach and the gate of the Bell, actually did make way, and the horses went in, my lord walking after them with his hat on his head.

As he was going in at the gate, through which the coach had just rolled, another cry begins, of "No Popery — no Papists!" my lord turns round and faces them once more.

"God save the King!" says he at the highest pitch of his voice. "Who dares abuse the King's religion? You, you d — d psalmsinging cobbler, as sure as I'm a magistrate of this county, I'll commit you." The fellow shrunk back, and my lord retreated with all the honours of the day. But when the little flurry caused by the scene was over, and the flush passed off his face, he relapsed into his usual languor, trifled with his little dog and yawned when my lady spoke to him.

This mob was one of many thousands that were going about the country at that time, huzzaing for the acquittal of the seven bishops who had been tried just then, and about whom little Harry Esmond at that time knew scarce anything. It was assizes at Hexton, and there was a great meeting of the gentry at the Bell; and my lord's people had their new liveries on, and Harry a little suit of blue and silver, which he wore upon occasions of state; and the gentlefolks came round and talked to my lord; and a judge in a red gown, who seemed a very great personage, especially complimented him and my lady, who was mighty grand. Harry remembers her train borne up by her gentlewoman. There was an assembly and ball at the great room at the Bell, and other young gentlemen of the county families looked on as he did. One of them jeered him for his black eye, which was swelled by the potatoe, and another called him a bastard, on which he and Harry fell to fisticuffs. My lord's cousin, Colonel Esmond of Walcote, was there, and separated

the two lads, a great tall gentleman with a handsome, good-natured face. The boy did not know how nearly in after life he should be allied to Colonel Esmond, and how much kindness he should have to owe him.

There was little love between the two families. My lady used not to spare Colonel Esmond in talking of him, for reasons which have been hinted already; but about which, at his tender age, Henry Esmond could be expected to know nothing.

Very soon afterwards my lord and lady went to London with Mr. Holt, leaving, however, the page behind them. The little man had the great house of Castlewood to himself; or between him and the housekeeper, Mrs. Worksop, an old lady who was a kinswoman of the family in some distant way, and a Protestant, but a stanch Tory and king's-man, as all the Esmonds were. He used to go to school to Dr. Tusher when he was at home, though the Doctor was much occupied too. There was a great stir and commotion everywhere, even in the little quiet village of Castlewood, whither a party of people came from the town, who would have broken Castlewood Chapel windows, but the village people turned out; and even old Sieveright, the republican blacksmith, along with them: for my lady, though she was a Papist, and had many odd ways, was kind to the tenantry, and there was always a plenty of beef and blankets, and medicine for the poor, at Castlewood Hall.

A kingdom was changing hands whilst my lord and lady were away. King James was flying, the Dutchmen were coming; awful stories about them and the Prince of Orange used old Mrs. Worksop to tell to the idle little page.

He liked the solitude of the great house very well; he had all the play-books to read, and no Father Holt to whip him, and a hundred childish pursuits and pastimes, without doors and within, which made this time very pleasant.

CHAPTER V.

My Superiors are engaged in plots for the Restoration of King James II.

Not having been able to sleep, for thinking of some lines for eels which he had placed the night before, the lad was lying in his little bed, waiting for the hour when the gate would be open, and he and his comrade, Job Lockwood the porter's son, might go to the pond and see what fortune had brought them. At daybreak Job was to awaken him, but his own eagerness for the sport had served as a reveillez long since — so long, that it seemed to him as if the day never would come.

It might have been four o'clock when he heard the door of the opposite chamber, the Chaplain's room, open, and the voice of a man coughing in the passage. Harry jumped up, thinking for certain it was a robber, or hoping, perhaps, for a ghost, and flinging open his own door, saw before him the Chaplain's door open, and a light inside, and a figure standing in the door-way, in the midst of a great smoke which issued from the room.

"Who 's there?" cried out the boy, who was of a good spirit.

"Silentium!" whispered the other; "'t is I, my boy!" and holding his hand out, Harry had no difficulty in recognising his master and friend, Father Holt. A curtain was over the window of the Chaplain's

room that looked to the court, and Harry saw that the smoke came from a great flame of papers which were burning in a brazier when he entered the Chaplain's room. After giving a hasty greeting and blessing to the lad, who was charmed to see his tutor, the Father continued the burning of his papers, drawing them from a cupboard over the mantel-piece wall, which Harry had never seen before.

Father Holt laughed, seeing the lad's attention fixed at once on this hole. "That is right, Harry," he said; "faithful little famuli see all and say nothing. You are faithful, I know."

"I know I would go to the stake for you," said Harry.

"I don't want your head," said the Father, patting it kindly; "all you have to do is to hold your tongue. Let us burn these papers, and say nothing to anybody. Should you like to read them?"

Henry Esmond blushed, and held down his head; he *had* looked as the fact was, and without thinking, at the paper before him; and though he had seen it, could not understand a word of it, the letters being quite clear enough, but quite without meaning. They burned the papers, beating down the ashes in a brazier, so that scarce any traces of them remained.

Harry had been accustomed to see Father Holt in more dresses than one; it not being safe, or worth the danger, for Popish ecclesiastics to wear their proper dress; and he was in consequence in no wise astonished that the priest should now appear before him in a riding dress, with large buff leather boots, and a feather to his hat, plain, but such as gentlemen wore.

"You know the secret of the cupboard," said he,

laughing, "and must be prepared for other mysteries; and he opened — but not a secret cupboard this time — only a wardrobe, which he usually kept locked, and from which he now took out two or three dresses and perruques of different colours, a couple of swords of a pretty make (Father Holt was an expert practitioner with the small sword, and every day, whilst he was at home, he and his pupil practised this exercise, in which the lad became a very great proficient), a military coat and cloak, and a farmer's smock, and placed them in the large hole over the mantel-piece from which the papers had been taken.

"If they miss the cupboard," he said, "they will not find these; if they find them, they'll tell no tales, except that Father Holt wore more suits of clothes than one. All Jesuits do. You know what deceivers we are, Harry."

Harry was alarmed at the notion that his friend was about to leave him; but "No," the priest said; "I may very likely come back with my lord in a few days. We are to be tolerated; we are not to be persecuted. But they may take a fancy to pay a visit at Castlewood ere our return; and as gentlemen of my cloth are suspected, they might choose to examine my papers, which concern nobody — at least, not them." And to this day, whether the papers in cypher related to politics, or to the affairs of that mysterious society whereof Father Holt was a member, his pupil, Harry Esmond, remains in entire ignorance.

The rest of his goods, his small wardrobe, &c., Holt left untouched on his shelves and in his cupboard, taking down — with a laugh, however — and flinging into the brazier, where he only half burned them, some

theological treatise which he had been writing against the English divines. "And now," said he, "Henry, my son, you may testify, with a safe conscience, that you saw me burning Latin sermons the last time I was here before I went away to London; and it will be daybreak directly, and I must be away before Lockwood is stirring."

"Will not Lockwood let you out, Sir?" Esmond asked. Holt laughed; he was never more gay or good-humoured than when in the midst of action or danger.

"Lockwood knows nothing of my being here, mind you," he said; "nor would you, you little wretch, had you slept better. You must forget that I have been here; and now farewell. Close the door, and go to your own room, and don't come out till — stay, why should you not know one secret more? I know you will never betray me."

In the Chaplain's room were two windows; the one looking into the court facing westwards to the fountain; the other, a small casement strongly barred, and looking on to the green in front of the Hall. This window was too high to reach from the ground; but, mounting on a buffet which stood beneath it, Father Holt showed me how, by pressing on the base of the window, the whole framework of lead, glass, and iron staunchions, descended into a cavity worked below, from which it could be drawn and restored to its usual place from without; a broken pane being purposely open to admit the hand which was to work upon the spring of the machine.

"When I am gone," Father Holt said, "you may push away the buffet, so that no one may fancy that

an exit has been made that way; lock the door; place the key — where shall we put the key? — under Chrysostom on the bookshelf; and if any ask for it, say I keep it there, and told you where to find it, if you had need to go to my room. The descent is easy down the wall into the ditch; and so, once more farewell, until I see thee again, my dear son." And with this the intrepid Father, mounted the buffet with great agility and briskness, stepped across the window, lifting up the bars and framework again from the other side, and only leaving room for Harry Esmond to stand on tiptoe and kiss his hand before the casement closed, the bars fixing as firm as ever seemingly in the stone arch overhead. When Father Holt next arrived at Castlewood, it was by the public gate on horseback; and he never so much as alluded to the existence of the private issue to Harry, except when he had need of a private messenger from within, for which end, no doubt, he had instructed his young pupil in this means of quitting the Hall.

Esmond, young as he was, would have died sooner than betray his friend and master, as Mr. Holt well knew; for he had tried the boy more than once, putting temptations in his way to see whether he would yield to them and confess afterwards, or whether he would resist them, as he did sometimes, or whether he would lie, which he never did. Holt instructing the boy on this point, however, that if to keep silence is not to lie, as it certainly is not, yet silence is after all equivalent to a negation — and therefore a downright No, in the interest of justice or your friend, and in reply to a question that may be prejudicial to either, is not criminal, but, on the contrary, praiseworthy; and as law-

ful a way as the other of eluding a wrongful demand. For instance (says he), suppose a good citizen, who had seen his Majesty take refuge there, had been asked, "Is King Charles up that oak tree?" His duty would have been not say, Yes — so that the Cromwellians should seize the King and murder him like his father — but No; his Majesty being private in the tree, and therefore not to be seen there by loyal eyes: all which instruction, in religion and morals, as well as in the rudiments of the tongues and sciences, the boy took eagerly and with gratitude from his tutor. When then Holt was gone, and told Harry not to see him, it was as if he had never been. And he had this answer pat when he came to be questioned a few days after.

The Prince of Orange was then at Salisbury, as young Esmond learned from seeing Doctor Tusher in his best cassock (though the roads were muddy, and he never was known to wear his silk, only his stuff one a-horseback), with a great orange cockade in his broad-leafed hat, and Nahum, his clerk, ornamented with a like decoration. The Doctor was walking up and down in front of his parsonage when little Esmond saw him, and heard him say, he was going to pay his duty to his Highness the Prince, as he mounted his pad and rode away with Nahum behind. The village people had orange cockades too, and his friend the blacksmith's laughing daughter pinned one into Harry's old hat, which he tore out indignantly when they bid him to cry 'God save the Prince of Orange and the Protestant religion!" but the people only laughed, for they liked the boy in the village, where his solitary condition moved the general pity, and where he found friendly welcomes and faces in many houses. Father

Holt had many friends there too, for he not only would fight the blacksmith at theology, never losing his temper, but laughing the whole time in his pleasant way, but he cured him of an ague with quinquina, and was always ready with a kind word for any man that asked it, so that they said in the village 't was a pity the two were Papists.

The Director and the Vicar of Castlewood agreed very well; indeed, the former was a perfectly bred gentleman, and it was the latter's business to agree with everybody. Doctor Tusher and the lady's maid, his spouse, had a boy who was about the age of little Esmond; and there was such a friendship between the lads, as propinquity and tolerable kindness and good humour on either side would be pretty sure to occasion. Tom Tusher was sent off early however to a school in London, whither his father took him and a volume of sermons in the first year of the reign of King James; and Tom returned but once, a year afterwards, to Castlewood for many years of his scholastic and collegiate life. Thus there was less danger to Tom of a perversion of his faith by the Director, who scarce ever saw him, than there was to Harry, who constantly was in the Vicar's company; but as long as Harry's religion was his Majesty's, and my lord's, and my lady's, the Doctor said gravely, it should not be for him to disturb or disquiet him: it was far from him to say that his Majesty's church was not a branch of the Catholic church; upon which Father Holt used, according to his custom, to laugh and say, that the Holy Church throughout all the world, and the noble army of martyrs, were very much obliged to the Doctor.

It was while Dr. Tusher was away at Salisbury that there came a troop of dragoons with orange scarfs, and quartered in Castlewood, and some of them came up to the Hall, where they took possession, robbing nothing however beyond the hen-house and the beer-cellar; and only insisting upon going through the house and looking for papers. The first room they asked to look at was Father Holt's room, of which Harry Esmond brought the key, and they opened the drawers and the cupboards, and tossed over the papers and clothes — but found nothing except his books and clothes, and the vestments in a box by themselves, with which the dragoons made merry to Harry Esmond's horror. And to the questions which the gentlemen put to Harry, he replied, that Father Holt was a very kind man to him, and a very learned man, and Harry supposed would tell him none of his secrets, if he had any. He was about eleven years old at this time, and looked as innocent as boys of his age.

The family were away more than six months, and when they returned they were in the deepest state of dejection, for King James had been banished, the Prince of Orange was on the throne, and the direst persecutions of those of the Catholic faith were apprehended by my lady, who said she did not believe that there was a word of truth in the promises of toleration that Dutch monster made, or in a single word the perjured wretch said. My lord and lady were in a manner prisoners in their own house; so her ladyship gave the little page to know, who was by this time growing of an age to understand what was passing about him, and something of the characters of the people he lived with.

"We are prisoners," says she, "in every thing but chains, we are prisoners. Let them come, let them consign me to dungeons, or strike off my head from this poor little throat" (and she clasped it in her long fingers). "The blood of the Esmonds will always flow freely for their kings. We are not like the Churchills — the Judases who kiss their master and betray him. We know how to suffer, how even to forgive in the royal cause" (no doubt it was to that fatal business of losing the place of Groom of the Posset to which her ladyship alluded, as she did half-a-dozen times in the day). "Let the tyrant of Orange bring his rack and his odious Dutch tortures — the beast! the wretch! I spit upon him and defy him. Cheerfully will I lay this head upon the block; cheerfully will I accompany my lord to the scaffold: we will cry 'God save King James!' with our dying breath, and smile in the face of the executioner." And she told her page a hundred times at least of the particulars of the last interview which she had with his Majesty.

"I flung myself before my Liege's feet," she said, "at Salisbury. I devoted myself — my husband — my house, to his cause. Perhaps he remembered old times when Isabella Esmond was young and fair; perhaps he recalled the day when 'twas not *I* that knelt — at least he spoke to me with a voice that reminded *me* of days gone by. 'Egad!' said his Majesty, 'you should go to the Prince of Orange, if you want anything.' 'No Sire,' I replied, 'I would not kneel to a Usurper; the Esmond that would have served your Majesty will never be groom to a traitor's posset.' The royal exile smiled, even in the midst of his mis-

fortune; he deigned to raise me with words of consolation. The Viscount, my husband, himself, could not be angry, at the august salute with which he honoured me!"

The public misfortune had the effect of making my lord and his lady better friends than they ever had been since their courtship. My Lord Viscount had shown both loyalty and spirit; when these were rare qualities in the dispirited party about the King; and the praise he got elevated him not a little in his wife's good opinion, and perhaps in his own. He wakened up from the listless and supine life which he had been leading; was always riding to and fro in consultation with this friend or that of the King's; the page of course knowing little of his doings, but remarking only his greater cheerfulness and altered demeanour.

Father Holt came to the Hall constantly, but officiated no longer openly as chaplain; he was always fetching and carrying: strangers military and ecclesiastic (Harry knew the latter though they came in all sorts of disguises), were continually arriving and departing. My lord made long absences and sudden reappearances, using sometimes the means of exit which Father Holt had employed, though how often the little window in the Chaplain's room let in or let out my lord and his friends, Harry could not tell. He stoutly kept his promise to the Father of not prying, and if at midnight from his little room he heard noises of persons stirring in the next chamber, he turned round to the wall and hid his curiosity under his pillow until it fell asleep. Of course he could not help remarking that the priest's journeys were constant, and under-

standing by a hundred signs that some active though secret business employed him: what this was may pretty well be guessed by what soon happened to my lord.

No garrison or watch was put into Castlewood when my lord came back, but a guard was in the village; and one or other of them was always on the Green keeping a look-out on our great gate, and those who went out and in. Lockwood said that at night especially every person who came in or went out was watched by the outlying sentries. 'Twas lucky that we had a gate which their worships knew nothing about. My lord and Father Holt must have made constant journeys at night: once or twice little Harry acted as their messenger and discreet little aide-de-camp. He remembers he was bidden to go into the village with his fishing-rod, enter certain houses, ask for a drink of water, and tell the good man, "there would be a horse-market at Newbury next Thursday," and so carry the same message on to the next house on his list.

He did not know what the message meant at the time; nor what was happening: which may as well, however, for clearness sake, be explained here. The Prince of Orange being gone to Ireland, where the King was ready to meet him with a great army, it was determined that a great rising of his Majesty's party should take place in this country; and my lord was to head the force in our county. Of late he had taken a greater lead in affairs than before, having the indefatigable Mr. Holt at his elbow, and my Lady Viscountess strongly urging him on; and my Lord Sark being in the Tower a prisoner, and Sir Wilmot

Crawley, of Queen's Crawley, having gone over to the Prince of Orange's side — my lord became the most considerable person in our part of the county for the affairs of the King.

It was arranged that the regiment of Scots Greys and Dragoons then quartered at Newbury, should declare for the King on a certain day, when likewise the gentry affected to his Majesty's cause were to come in with their tenants and adherents to Newbury, march upon the Dutch troops at Reading under Ginckel; and, these overthrown, and their indomitable little master away in Ireland, 't was thought that our side might move on London itself, and a confident victory was predicted for the King.

As these great matters were in agitation, my lord lost his listless manner and seemed to gain health; my lady did not scold him, Mr. Holt came to and fro, busy always; and little Harry longed to have been a few inches taller, that he might draw a sword in this good cause.

One day, it must have been about the month of July 1690, my lord, in a great horseman's coat under which Harry could see the shining of a steel breast-plate he had on, called little Harry to him, put the hair off the child's forehead, and kissed him, and bade God bless him in such an affectionate way, as he never had used before. Father Holt blessed him too, and then they took leave of my Lady Viscountess, who came from her apartment with a pocket-handkerchief to her eyes, and her gentlewoman and Mrs. Tusher supporting her.

"You are going to — to ride," says she — "Oh

that I might come too! — but in my situation I am forbidden horse exercise."

"We kiss my Lady Marchioness's hand," says Mr. Holt.

"My Lord, God speed you!" she said, stepping up and embracing my lord in a grand manner. "Mr. Holt, I ask your blessing," and she knelt down for that, whilst Mrs. Tusher tossed her head up.

Mr. Holt gave the same benediction to the little page, who went down and held my lord's stirrups for him to mount; there were two servants waiting there too — and they rode out of Castlewood gate.

As they crossed the bridge, Harry could see an officer in scarlet ride up touching his hat, and address my lord.

The party stopped, and came to some parley or discussion, which presently ended, my lord putting his horse into a canter after taking off his hat and making a bow to the officer who rode alongside him step for step: the trooper accompanying him, falling back, and riding with my lord's two men. They cantered over the Green, and behind the elms (my lord waving his hand Harry thought), and so they disappeared.

That evening we had a great panic, the cowboy coming at milking-time riding one of our horses, which he had found grazing at the outer park-wall.

All night my Lady Viscountess was in a very quiet and subdued mood. She scarce found fault with anybody; she played at cards for six hours; little page Esmond went to sleep. He prayed for my lord and the good cause before closing his eyes.

It was quite in the grey of the morning, when the

porter's bell rang, and old Lockwood waking up, let in one of my lord's servants, who had gone with him in the morning, and who returned with a melancholy story.

The officer who rode up to my lord, had, it appeared, said to him, that it was his duty to inform his lordship that he was not under arrest, but under surveillance, and to request him not to ride abroad that day.

My lord replied that riding was good for his health, that if the Captain chose to accompany him he was welcome, and it was then that he made a bow, and they cantered away together.

When he came on to Wansey Down, my lord all of a sudden pulled up, and the party came to a halt at the cross-way.

"Sir," says he to the officer, "we are four to two; will you be so kind as to take that road, and leave me to go mine?"

"Your road is mine, my lord," says the officer.

"Then," says my lord, but he had no time to say more, for the officer, drawing a pistol, snapped it at his lordship; as at the same moment, Father Holt, drawing a pistol, shot the officer through the head.

It was done, and the man dead in an instant of time. The orderly, gazing at the officer, looked scared for a moment, and galloped away for his life.

"Fire! fire!" cries out Father Hold, sending another shot after the trooper, but the two servants were too much surprised to use their pieces, and my lord calling to them to hold their hands, the fellow got away.

"Mr. Holt, *qui pensait à tout*," says Blaise, "gets

off his horse, examines the pockets of the dead officer for papers, gives his money to us two, and says 'The wine is drawn, M. le Marquis,' — why did he say Marquis to M. le Vicomte? — 'we must drink it.'

"The poor gentleman's horse was a better one than that I rode," Blaise continues; "Mr. Holt bids me get on him, and so I gave a cut to Whitefoot, and she trotted home. We rode on towards Newbury; we heard firing towards midday: at two o'clock a horseman comes up to us as we were giving our cattle water at an inn — and says, all is done. The Écossois declared an hour too soon — General Ginckel was down upon them. The whole thing was at an end."

"'And we've shot an officer on duty, and let his orderly escape,' says my lord.

"'Blaise,' says Mr. Holt, writing two lines on his table-book, one for my lady, and one for you, master Harry; 'you must go back to Castlewood, and deliver these,' and behold me."

And he gave Harry the two papers. He read that to himself, which only said, "Burn the papers in the cupboard, burn this. You know nothing about anything." Harry read this, ran upstairs to his mistress's apartment, where her gentlewoman slept near to the door, made her bring a light and wake my lady, into whose hands he gave the paper. She was a wonderful object to look at in her night attire, nor had Harry ever seen the like.

As soon as she had the paper in her hand, Harry stepped back to the Chaplain's room, opened the secret cupboard over the fireplace, burned all the papers in it, and as he had seen the priest do before, took down one of his reverence's manuscript sermons, and

half burnt that in the brazier. By the time the papers were quite destroyed, it was daylight. Harry ran back to his mistress again. Her gentlewoman ushered him again into her ladyship's chamber: she told him (from behind her nuptial curtains) to bid the coach be got ready, and that she would ride away anon.

But the mysteries of her ladyship's toilette were as awfully long on this day as on any other, and long after the coach was ready, my lady was still attiring herself. And just as the Viscountess stepped forth from her room, ready for departure, young Job Lockwood comes running up from the village with news that a lawyer, three officers, and twenty or four-and-twenty soldiers, were marching thence upon the house. Job had but two minutes the start of them, and ere he had well told his story, the troop rode into our court-yard.

CHAPTER VI.

The issue of the plots. — The death of Thomas, third Viscount of Castlewood: and the imprisonment of his Viscountess.

At first my lady was for dying like Mary, Queen of Scots (to whom she fancied she bore a resemblance in beauty), and, stroking her scraggy neck, said, "They will find Isabel of Castlewood is equal to her fate." Her gentlewoman, Victoire, persuaded her that her prudent course was, as she could not fly, to receive the troops as though she suspected nothing, and that her chamber was the best place wherein to await them. So her black Japan casket which Harry was to carry to the coach was taken back to her ladyship's chamber, whither the maid and mistress retired. Victoire came out presently, bidding the page to say her ladyship was ill, confined to her bed with the rheumatism.

By this time the soldiers had reached Castlewood. Harry Esmond saw them from the window of the tapestry parlour; a couple of sentinels were posted at the gate — a half-dozen more walked towards the stable; and some others, preceded by their commander, and a man in black, a lawyer probably, were conducted by one of the servants to the stair leading up to the part of the house which my lord and lady inhabited.

So the Captain, a handsome kind man, and the lawyer, came through the ante-room, to the tapestry

parlour, and where now was nobody but young Harry Esmond, the page.

"Tell your mistress, little man," says the Captain, kindly, "that we must speak to her."

"My mistress is ill a-bed," said the page.

"What complaint has she?" asked the Captain.

The boy said "the rheumatism!"

"Rheumatism! that 's a sad complaint," continues the good-natured Captain; "and the coach is in the yard to fetch the Doctor, I suppose?"

"I don't know," says the boy.

"And how long has her ladyship been ill?"

"I don't know," says the boy.

"When did my lord go away?"

"Yesterday night."

"With Father Holt?"

"With Mr. Holt."

"And which way did they travel?" asks the lawyer.

"They travelled without me," says the page.

"We must see Lady Castlewood."

"I have orders that nobody goes in to her ladyship — she is sick," says the page; but at this moment Victoire came out. "Hush!" says she; and, as if not knowing that any one was near, "What 's this noise?" says she, "Is this gentleman the Doctor?"

"Stuff! we must see Lady Castlewood," says the lawyer pushing by.

The curtains of her ladyship's room were down, and the chamber dark, and she was in bed with a night-cap on her head, and propped up by her pillows, looking none the less ghastly because of the red which was still on her cheeks, and which she could not afford to forego.

"Is that the Doctor?" she said.

"There is no use with this deception, Madam," Captain Westbury said (for so he was named.) "My duty is to arrest the person of Thomas, Viscount Castlewood, a non-juring peer — of Robert Tusher, Vicar of Castlewood, and Henry Holt, known under various other names and designations, a Jesuit-priest, who officiated as chaplain here in the late king's time, and is now at the head of the conspiracy which was about to break out in this country against the authority of their Majesties King William and Queen Mary — and my orders are to search the house for such papers or traces of the conspiracy as may be found here. Your ladyship will please to give me your keys, and it will be as well for yourself that you should help us, in every way, in our search."

"You see, Sir, that I have the rheumatism, and cannot move," said the lady, looking uncommonly ghastly as she sat up in her bed, where however she had had her cheeks painted, and a new cap put on, so that she might at least look her best when the officers came.

"I shall take leave to place a sentinel in the chamber, so that your ladyship, in case you should wish to rise, may have an arm to lean on," Captain Westbury said. "Your woman will show me where I am to look;" and Madame Victoire, chattering in her half French and half English jargon, opened, while the Captain examined one drawer after another; but, as Harry Esmond thought, rather carelessly, with a smile on his face, as if he was only conducting the examination for form's sake.

Before one of the cupboards Victoire flung herself

down, stretching out her arms, and, with a piercing shriek cried, "*Non, jamais, Monsieur l'Officier! Jamais!* I will rather die than let you see this wardrobe."

But Captain Westbury would open it, still with a smile on his face, which, when the box was opened, turned into a fair burst of laughter. It contained — not papers regarding the conspiracy — but my lady's wigs, washes, and rouge-pots, and Victoire said men were monsters, as the Captain went on with his perquisition. He tapped the back to see whether or no it was hollow, and as he thrust his hands into the cupboard, my lady from her bed called out with a voice that did not sound like that of a very sick woman: "Is it your commission to insult ladies as well as to arrest gentlemen, Captain?"

"These articles are only dangerous when worn by your ladyship," the Captain said with a low bow, and a mock grin of politeness. "I have found nothing which concerns the Government as yet — only the weapons with which beauty is authorised to kill," says he, pointing to a wig with his sword-tip. "We must now proceed to search the rest of the house."

"You are not going to leave that wretch in the room with me," cried my lady, pointing to the soldier.

"What can I do, Madam? Somebody you must have to smooth your pillow and bring your medicine — permit me —"

"Sir!" screamed out my lady —

"Madam, if you are too ill to leave the bed," the Captain then said, rather sternly, "I must have in four of my men to lift you off in the sheet: I must examine this bed, in a word; papers may be hidden

in a bed as elsewhere; we know that very well, and * * * ."

Here it was her ladyship's turn to shriek, for the Captain, with his fist shaking the pillows and bolsters, at last came to "burn," as they say in the play of forfeits, and wrenching away one of the pillows, said, "Look! did not I tell you so? Here is a pillow stuffed with paper."

"Some villain has betrayed us," cried out my lady, sitting up in the bed, showing herself full dressed under her night-rail.

"And now your ladyship can move I am sure; permit me to give you my hand to rise. You will have to travel for some distance, as far as Hexton Castle to-night. Will you have your coach? Your woman shall attend you if you like — and the japan-box?"

"Sir! You don't strike a *man* when he is down," said my lady, with some dignity: "can you not spare a woman?"

"Your ladyship must please to rise and let me search the bed," said the Captain; "there is no more time to lose in bandying talk."

And without more ado, the gaunt old woman got up. Harry Esmond recollected to the end of his life that figure, with the brocade dress and the white night-rail, and the gold-clocked red stockings, and white red-heeled shoes sitting up in the bed, and stepping down from it. The trunks were ready packed for departure in her ante-room: and the horses ready harnessed in the stable: about all which the Captain seemed to know, by information got from some quarter or other; and, whence, Esmond could make a pretty

shrewd guess in aftertimes, when Dr. Tusher complained that King William's Government had basely treated him for services done in that cause.

And here he may relate, though he was then too young to know all that was happening, what the papers contained, of which Captain Westbury had made a seizure, and which papers had been transferred from the japan-box to the bed when the officers arrived.

There was a list of gentlemen of the county in Father Holt's hand-writing, — Mr. Freeman's (King James's) friends, — a similar paper being found among those of Sir John Fenwick and Mr. Coplestone who suffered death for this conspiracy.

There was a patent conferring the title of Marquis of Esmond on my Lord Castlewood, and the heirs male of his body; his appointment as Lord Lieutenant of the County, and Major-General.*

There were various letters from the nobility and gentry, some ardent and some doubtful, in the King's service; and (very luckily for him) two letters concerning Colonel Francis Esmond: one from Father Holt, which said, "I have been to see this Colonel at his house at Walcote near to Wells, where he resides since the King's departure, and pressed him very eagerly in Mr. Freeman's cause, showing him the great advantage he would have by trading with that merchant, offering him large premiums there as agreed between us. But

* To have this rank of Marquis restored in the family had always been my Lady Viscountess's ambition; and her old maiden aunt, Barbara Topham, the goldsmith's daughter, dying about this time, and leaving all her property to Lady Castlewood, I have heard that her ladyship sent almost the whole of the money to King James, a proceeding which so irritated my Lord Castlewood that he actually went to the parish church, and was only appeased by the Marquis's title which his exiled Majesty sent to him in return for the £15,000 his faithful subject lent him.

he says no: he considers Mr. Freeman the head of the firm, will never trade against him or embark with any other trading company, but considers his duty was done when Mr. Freeman left England. This Colonel seems to care more for his wife and his beagles than for affairs. He asked me much about young H. E., 'that bastard' as he called him: doubting my lord's intentions respecting him. I reassured him on this head, stating what I knew of the lad, and our intentions respecting him, but with regard to Freeman he was inflexible."

And another letter was from Colonel Esmond to his kinsman, to say that one Captain Holton had been with him offering him large bribes to join *you know who*, and saying that the head of the house of Castlewood was deeply engaged in that quarter. But for his part he had broke his sword when the K. left the country, and would never again fight in that quarrel. The P. of O. was a man, at least, of a noble courage, and his duty and, as he thought, every Englishman's, was to keep the country quiet, and the French out of it: and, in fine, that he would have nothing to do with the scheme.

Of the existence of these two letters and the contents of the pillow, Colonel Frank Esmond, who became Viscount Castlewood, told Henry Esmond, afterwards, when the letters were shown to his lordship, who congratulated himself, as he had good reason, that he had not joined in the scheme which proved so fatal to many concerned in it. But, naturally, the lad knew little about these circumstances when they happened under his eyes: only being aware that his patron and his mistress were in some trouble, which had

caused the flight of the one, and the apprehension of the other by the officers of King William.

The seizure of the papers effected, the gentlemen did not pursue their further search through Castlewood house very rigorously. They examined Mr. Holt's room, being led thither by his pupil, who showed, as the Father had bidden him, the place where the key of his chamber lay, opened the door for the gentlemen, and conducted them into the room.

When the gentlemen came to the half-burned papers in the brazier, they examined them eagerly enough, and their young guide was a little amused at their perplexity.

"What are these?" says one.

"They 're written in a foreign language," says the lawyer. "What are you laughing at, little whelp?" adds he, turning round as he saw the boy smile.

"Mr. Holt said they were sermons," Harry said, "and bade me to burn them;" which indeed was true of those papers.

"Sermons indeed — it 's treason, I would lay a wager," cries the lawyer.

"Egad! it 's Greek to me," says Captain Westbury. "Can you read it, little boy?"

"Yes Sir, a little," Harry said.

"Then read, and read in English, Sir, on your peril," said the lawyer. And Harry began to translate:

"Hath not one of your own writers said, 'The children of Adam are now labouring as much as he himself ever did, about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, shaking the boughs thereof, and seeking the fruit, being for the most part unmindful of the tree

of life.' O blind generation! 'tis this tree of knowledge to which the serpent has led you" — and here the boy was obliged to stop, the rest of the page being charred by the fire: and asked of the lawyer — "Shall I go on, Sir?"

The lawyer said — "This boy is deeper than he seems: who knows that he is not laughing at us?"

"Let's have in Dick the Scholar," cried Captain Westbury, laughing: and he called to a trooper out of the window — "Ho, Dick, come in here and construe."

A thick-set soldier, with a square good-humoured face, came in at the summons, saluting his officer.

"Tell us what is this, Dick," says the lawyer.

"My name is Steele, Sir," says the soldier. "I may be Dick for my friends, but I don't name gentlemen of your cloth amongst them."

"Well then, Steele."

"Mr. Steele, Sir, if you please. When you address a gentleman of his Majesty's Horse Guards, be pleased not to be so familiar."

"I didn't know, Sir," said the lawyer.

"How should you? I take it you are not accustomed to meet with gentlemen," says the trooper.

"Hold thy prate, and read that bit of paper," says Westbury.

"'Tis Latin," says Dick, glancing at it, and again saluting his officer, "and from a sermon of Mr. Cudworth's," and he translated the words pretty much as Henry Esmond had rendered them.

"What a young scholar you are," says the Captain to the boy.

"Depend on't, he knows more than he tells," says

the lawyer. "I think we will pack him off in the coach with old Jezebel."

"For construing a bit of Latin?" said the Captain, very good-naturedly.

"I would as lief go there as anywhere," Harry Esmond said, simply, "for there is nobody to care for me."

There must have been something touching in the child's voice, or in this description of his solitude, — for the Captain looked at him very good-naturedly, and the trooper, called Steele, put his hand kindly on the lad's head, and said some words in the Latin tongue.

"What does he say?" says the lawyer.

"Faith, ask Dick himself," cried Captain Westbury.

"I said I was not ignorant of misfortune myself, and had learned to succour the miserable, and that's not *your* trade, Mr. Sheepskin," said the trooper.

"You had better leave Dick the Scholar alone, Mr. Corbet," the Captain said. And Harry Esmond, always touched by a kind face and kind word, felt very grateful to this good-natured champion.

The horses were by this time harnessed to the coach; and the Countess and Victoire came down and were put into the vehicle. This woman, who quarrelled with Harry Esmond all day, was melted at parting with him, and called him "dear angel," and "poor infant," and a hundred other names.

The Viscountess giving him her lean hand to kiss, bade him always be faithful to the house of Esmond. "If evil should happen to my lord," says she, "his *successor* I trust will be found, and give you protection.

Situated as I am they will not dare wreak their vengeance on me *now*." And she kissed a medal she wore with great fervour, and Henry Esmond knew not in the least what her meaning was; but hath since learned that, old as she was, she was for ever expecting, by the good offices of saints and relics, to have an heir to the title of Esmond.

Harry Esmond was too young to have been introduced into the secrets of politics in which his patrons were implicated; for they put but few questions to the boy (who was little of stature, and looked much younger than his age), and such questions as they put he answered cautiously enough, and professing even more ignorance than he had, for which his examiners willingly enough gave him credit. He did not say a word about the window or the cupboard over the fireplace; and these secrets quite escaped the eyes of the searchers.

So then my lady was consigned to her coach, and sent off to Hexton, with her woman and the man of law to bear her company, a couple of troopers riding on either side of the coach. And Harry was left behind at the Hall, belonging as it were to nobody, and quite alone in the world. The captain and a guard of men remained in possession there: and the soldiers who were very good-natured and kind, ate my lord's mutton and drank his wine, and made themselves comfortable, as they well might do in such pleasant quarters.

The captain had his dinner served in my lord's tapestry parlour, and poor little Harry thought his duty was to wait upon Captain Westbury's chair, as

his custom had been to serve his lord when he sat there.

After the departure of the Countess, Dick the Scholar took Harry Esmond under his special protection, and would examine him in his humanities and talk to him both of French and Latin, in which tongues the lad found, and his new friend was willing enough to acknowledge, that he was even more proficient than Scholar Dick. Hearing that he had learned them from a Jesuit, in the praise of whom and whose goodness Harry was never tired of speaking, Dick, rather to the boy's surprise, who began to have an early shrewdness, like many children bred up alone, showed a great deal of theological science, and knowledge of the points at issue between the two churches; so that he and Harry would have hours of controversy together, in which the boy was certainly worsted by the arguments of this singular trooper. "I am no common soldier," Dick would say, and indeed it was easy to see by his learning, breeding, and many accomplishments, that he was not — "I am of one of the most ancient families in the empire; I have had my education at a famous school, and a famous university; I learned my first rudiments of Latin near to Smithfield, in London, where the martyrs were roasted."

"You hanged as many of ours," interposed Harry; "and for the matter of persecution, Father Holt told me that a young gentleman of Edinburgh, eighteen years of age, student at the college there, was hanged for heresy only last year, though he recanted, and solemnly asked pardon for his errors."

"Faith! there has been too much persecution on both sides: but 't was you taught us."

"Nay, 't was the Pagans began it," cried the lad, and began to instance a number of saints of the Church, from the protomartyr downwards — "this one's fire went out under him: that one's oil cooled in the cauldron: at a third holy head the executioner chopped three times and it would not come off. Show us martyrs in *your* church for whom such miracles have been done."

"Nay," says the trooper gravely, "the miracles of the first three centuries belong to my church as well as yours, Master Papist," and then added, with something of a smile upon his countenance, and a queer look at Harry — "And yet, my little catechiser, I have sometimes thought about those miracles, that there was not much good in them, since the victim's head always finished by coming off at the third or fourth chop, and the cauldron if it did not boil one day, boiled the next. Howbeit, in our times, the Church has lost that questionable advantage of respites. There was never a shower to put out Ridley's fire, nor an angel to turn the edge of Campion's axe. The rack tore the limbs of Southwell the jesuit and Sympson the protestant alike. For faith, everywhere multitudes die willingly enough. I have read in Monsieur Rycaut's History of the Turks, of thousands of Mahomet's followers rushing upon death in battle as upon certain Paradise, and in the great Mogul's dominions people fling themselves by hundreds under the cars of the idols annually, and the widows burn themselves on their husbands' bodies, as 't is well known. 'T is not the dying for a faith that 's so hard, Master Harry — every man of every nation has done that — 't is the living up to it that is difficult, as I know to my cost,"

he added with a sigh. "And ah!" he added, "my poor lad, I am not strong enough to convince thee by my life — though to die for my religion would give me the greatest of joys — but I had a dear friend in Magdalen College in Oxford; I wish Joe Addison were here to convince thee, as he quickly could — for I think he's a match for the whole College of Jesuits; and what's more, in his life too. — In that very sermon of Doctor Cudworth's which your priest was quoting from, and which suffered martyrdom in the brazier," Dick added with a smile, "I had a thought of wearing the black coat (but was ashamed of my life you see, and took to this sorry red one) — I have often thought of Joe Addison — Doctor Cudworth says 'A good conscience is the best looking-glass of heaven' — and there's a serenity in my friend's face which always reflects it — I wish you could see him, Harry."

"Did he do you a great deal of good?" asked the lad, simply.

"He might have done," said the other — "at least he taught me to see and approve better things. 'T is my own fault, *deteriora sequi*."

"You seem very good," the boy said.

"I'm not what I seem, alas!" answered the trooper — and indeed, as it turned out, poor Dick told the truth — for that very night, at supper in the hall, where the gentlemen of the troop took their repasts, and passed most part of their days dicing and smoking of tobacco, and singing and cursing, over the Castlewood ale — Harry Esmond found Dick the Scholar in a woful state of drunkenness. He hiccupped out a sermon; and his laughing companions bade him sing a hymn, on which Dick, swearing he would run the

scoundrel through the body who insulted his religion, made for his sword, which was hanging on the wall, and fell down flat on the floor under it, saying to Harry, who ran forward to help him, "Ah, little Papist, I wish Joseph Addison was here."

Though the troopers of the King's Lifeguards were all gentlemen, yet the rest of the gentlemen seemed ignorant and vulgar boors to Harry Esmond, with the exception of this good-natured Corporal Steele the Scholar, and Captain Westbury and Lieutenant Trant, who were always kind to the lad. They remained for some weeks or months encamped in Castlewood, and Harry learned from them, from time to time, how the lady at Hexton Castle was treated, and the particulars of her confinement there. 'T is known that King William was disposed to deal very leniently with the gentry who remained faithful to the old king's cause; and no prince usurping a crown, as his enemies said he did (righteously taking it as I think now), ever caused less blood to be shed. As for women-conspirators, he kept spies on the least dangerous, and locked up the others. Lady Castlewood had the best rooms in Hexton Castle, and the gaoler's garden to walk in; and though she repeatedly desired to be led out to execution, like Mary Queen of Scots, there never was any thought of taking her painted old head off, or any desire to do aught but keep her person in security.

And it appeared she found that some were friends in her misfortune, whom she had, in her prosperity, considered as her worst enemies. Colonel Francis Esmond, my lord's cousin and her ladyship's, who had married the Dean of Winchester's daughter, and since

King James's departure out of England, had lived not very far away from Hexton town, hearing of his kinswoman's strait, and being friends with Colonel Brice, commanding for King William in Hexton, and with the church dignitaries there, came to visit her ladyship in prison, offering to his uncle's daughter any friendly services which lay in his power. And he brought his lady and little daughter to see the prisoner, to the latter of whom, a child of great beauty, and many winning ways, the old Viscountess took not a little liking, although between her ladyship and the child's mother there was little more love than formerly. There are some injuries which women never forgive one another; and Madam Francis Esmond, in marrying her cousin, had done one of those irretrievable wrongs to Lady Castlewood. But as she was now humiliated, and in misfortune, Madam Francis could allow a truce to her enmity, and could be kind for a while, at least, to her husband's discarded mistress. So the little Beatrix, her daughter, was permitted often to go and visit the imprisoned Viscountess, who, in so far as the child and its father were concerned, got to abate in her anger towards that branch of the Castlewood family. And, the letters of Colonel Esmond coming to light, as has been said, and his conduct being known to the King's council, the colonel was put in a better position with the existing government than he had ever before been; any suspicions regarding his loyalty were entirely done away; and so he was enabled to be of more service to his kinswoman than he could otherwise have been.

And now there befell an event by which this lady recovered her liberty, and the house of Castlewood

got a new owner, and fatherless little Harry Esmond a new and most kind protector and friend. Whatever that secret was which Harry was to hear from my lord, the boy never heard it; for that night when Father Holt arrived, and carried my lord away with him, was the last on which Harry ever saw his patron. What happened to my lord may be briefly told here. Having found the horses at the place where they were lying, my lord and Father Holt rode together to Chatteris, where they had temporary refuge with one of the Father's penitents in that city; but the pursuit being hot for them, and the reward for the apprehension of one or the other considerable, it was deemed advisable that they should separate; and the priest betook himself to other places of retreat known to him, whilst my lord passed over from Bristol into Ireland, in which kingdom King James had a court and an army. My lord was but a small addition to this; bringing, indeed, only his sword and the few pieces in his pocket; but the King received him with some kindness and distinction, in spite of his poor plight, confirmed him in his new title of Marquis, gave him a regiment, and promised him further promotion. But titles or promotion were not to benefit him now. My lord was wounded at the fatal battle of the Boyne, flying from which field (long after his master had set him an example), he lay for a while concealed in the marshy country near to the town of Trim, and more from catarrh and fever caught in the bogs than from the steel of the enemy in the battle, sank and died. May the earth lie light upon Thomas of Castlewood! He who writes this must speak in charity, though this lord did him and his two grievous wrongs: for one of

these he would have made amends, perhaps, had life been spared him; but the other lay beyond his power to repair, though 't is to be hoped that a greater Power than a priest has absolved him of it. He got the comfort of this absolution, too, such as it was: a priest of Trim writing a letter to my lady to inform her of this calamity.

But in those days letters were slow of travelling, and our priest's took two months or more on its journey from Ireland to England: where, when it did arrive, it did not find my lady at her own house; she was at the King's house of Hexton Castle when the letter came to Castlewood, but it was opened for all that by the officer in command there.

Harry Esmond well remembered the receipt of this letter, which Lockwood brought in as Captain Westbury and Lieutenant Trant were on the green playing at bowls, young Esmond looking on at the sport or reading his book in the arbour.

"Here 's news for Frank Esmond," says Captain Westbury; "Harry did you ever see Colonel Esmond?" And Captain Westbury looked very hard at the boy as he spoke.

Harry said he had seen him but once when he was at Hexton, at the ball there.

"And did he say anything?"

"He said what I don't care to repeat," Harry answered. For he was now twelve years of age: he knew what his birth was and the disgrace of it; and he felt no love towards the man who had most likely stained his mother's honour and his own.

"Did you love my Lord Castlewood?"

"I wait until I know my mother, Sir, to say;" the boy answered, his eyes filling with tears.

"Something has happened to Lord Castlewood," Captain Westbury said in a very grave tone — "something which must happen to us all. He is dead of a wound received at the Boyne, fighting for King James."

"I am glad my lord fought for the right cause," the boy said.

"It was better to meet death on the field like a man, than face it on Tower-hill, as some of them may," continued Mr. Westbury. "I hope he has made some testament, or provided for thee somehow. This letter says, he recommends *unicum filium suum dilectissimum* to his lady. I hope he has left you more than that."

Harry did not know, he said. He was in the hands of Heaven and Fate; but more lonely now, as it seemed to him, than he had been all the rest of his life; and that night, as he lay in his little room which he still occupied, the boy thought with a many pang of shame and grief of his strange and solitary condition: — how he had a father and no father; a nameless mother that had been brought to ruin, perhaps, by that very father whom Harry could only acknowledge in secret and with a blush, and whom he could neither love nor revere. And he sickened to think how Father Holt, a stranger, and two or three slodiers, his acquaintances of the last six weeks, were the only friends he had in the great wide world, where he was now quite alone. The soul of the boy was full of love, and he longed as he lay in the darkness there for some one upon whom he could bestow it.

He remembers, and must to his dying day, the thoughts and tears of that long night, the hours tolling through it. Who was he and what? Why here rather than elsewhere? I have a mind, he thought, to go to that priest at Trim, and find out what my father said to him on his death-bed confession. Is there any child in the whole world so unprotected as I am? Shall I get up and quit this place, and run to Ireland? With these thoughts and tears the lad passed that night away until he wept himself to sleep.

The next day, the gentlemen of the guard who had heard what had befallen him were more than usually kind to the child, especially his friend Scholar Dick, who told him about his own father's death, which had happened when Dick was a child at Dublin, not quite five years of age. "That was the first sensation of grief," Dick said, "I ever knew. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sate weeping beside it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling Papa; on which my mother caught me in her arms, and told me in a flood of tears Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again. And this," said Dick kindly, "has made me pity all children ever since; and caused me to love thee, my poor fatherless, motherless lad. And if ever thou wantest a friend, thou shalt have one in Richard Steele."

Harry Esmond thanked him, and was grateful But what could Corporal Steele do for him? — take him to ride a spare horse, and be servant to the troop? Though there might be a bar in Harry Esmond's

shield, it was a noble one. The council of the two friends was, that little Harry should stay where he was, and abide his fortune: so Esmond stayed on at Castlewood, awaiting with no small anxiety the fate, whatever it was, which was over him.

CHAPTER VII.

I am left at Castlewood an orphan, and find most kind protectors there.

During the stay of the soldiers in Castlewood, honest Dick the Scholar was the constant companion of the lonely little orphan lad, Harry Esmond: and they read together, and they played bowls together, and when the other troopers or their officers, who were free-spoken over their cups, (as was the way of that day, when neither men nor women were over-nice,) talked unbecomingly of their amours and gallantries before the child, Dick, who very likely was setting the whole company laughing, would stop their jokes with a *maxima debetur pueris reverentia*, and once offered to lug out against another trooper called Hulking Tom, who wanted to ask Harry Esmond a ribald question.

Also, Dick seeing that the child had, as he said, a sensibility above his years, and a great and praiseworthy discretion, confided to Harry his love for a vintner's daughter, near to the Tollyard, Westminster, whom Dick addressed as Saccharissa in many verses of his composition, and without whom he said it would be impossible that he could continue to live. He vowed this a thousand times in a day, though Harry smiled to see the love-lorn swain had his health and appetite as well as the most heart-whole trooper in the regiment: and he swore Harry to secresy too, which vow the lad religiously kept, until he found

that officers and privates were all taken into Dick's confidence, and had the benefit of his verses. And it must be owned likewise that while Dick was sighing after Saccharissa in London, he had consolations in the country: for there came a wench out of Castlewood village had washed his linen, and who cried sadly when she heard he was gone: and without paying her bill too, which Harry Esmond took upon himself to discharge by giving the girl a silver pocket-piece, which Scholar Dick had presented to him, when with many embraces and prayers for his prosperity Dick parted from him, the garrison of Castlewood being ordered away. Dick the Scholar said he would never forget his young friend, nor indeed did he: and Harry was sorry when the kind soldiers vacated Castlewood, looking forward with no small anxiety (for care and solitude had made him thoughtful beyond his years) to his fate when the new lord and lady of the house came to live there. He had lived to be past twelve years old now; and had never had a friend, save this wild trooper perhaps, and Father Holt; and had a fond and affectionate heart, tender to weakness, that would fain attach itself to somebody, and did not seem at rest until it had found a friend who would take charge of it.

The instinct which led Harry Esmond to admire and love the gracious person, the fair apparition of whose beauty and kindness had so moved him when he first beheld her, became soon a devoted affection and passion of gratitude which entirely filled his young heart, that as yet, except in the case of dear Father Holt, had had very little kindness for which to be thankful. *O Dea certè*, thought he, remembering the

lines out of the Æneis which Mr. Holt had taught him. There seemed, as the boy thought, in every look or gesture of this fair creature an angelical softness and bright pity — in motion or repose she seemed gracious alike; the tone of her voice, though she uttered words ever so trivial, gave him a pleasure that amounted almost to anguish. It cannot be called love, that a lad of twelve years of age, little more than a menial, felt for an exalted lady, his mistress: but it was worship. To catch her glance, to divine her errand and run on it before she had spoken it; to watch, follow, adore her; became the business of his life. Meanwhile, as is the way often, his idol had idols of her own, and never thought of or suspected the admiration of her little pigmy adorer.

My lady had on her side her three idols: first and foremost, Jove and supreme ruler, was her lord, Harry's patron, the good Viscount of Castlewood. All wishes of his were laws with her. If he had a headache, she was ill. If he frowned, she trembled. If he joked, she smiled and was charmed. If he went a-hunting, she was always at the window to see him ride away, her little son crowing on her arm, or on the watch till his return. She made dishes for his dinner: spiced his wine for him: made the toast for his tankard at breakfast: hushed the house when he slept in his chair, and watched for a look when he woke. If my lord was not a little proud of his beauty, my lady adored it. She clung to his arm as he paced the terrace, her two fair little hands clasped round his great one; her eyes were never tired of looking in his face and wondering at its perfection. Her little son was his son, and his father's look and curly brown hair. Her

daughter Beatrix was his daughter, and had his eyes — were there ever such beautiful eyes in the world? All the house was arranged so as to bring him ease and give him pleasure. She liked the small gentry round about to come and pay him court; never caring for admiration for herself, those who wanted to be well with the lady must admire him. Not regarding her dress, she would wear a gown to rags, because he had once liked it: and if he brought her a brooch or a ribbon would prefer it to all the most costly articles of her wardrobe.

My lord went to London every year for six weeks, and the family being too poor to appear at Court with any figure, he went alone. It was not until he was out of sight that her face showed any sorrow: and what a joy when he came back! What preparation before his return! The fond creature had his arm-chair at the chimney-side — delighting to put the children in it, and look at them there. Nobody took his place at the table; but his silver tankard stood there as when my lord was present.

A pretty sight it was to see, during my lord's absence, or on those many mornings when sleep or headache kept him abed, this fair young lady of Castlewood, her little daughter at her knee, and her domestics gathered round her, reading the Morning Prayer of the English Church. Esmond long remembered how she looked and spoke, kneeling reverently before the sacred book, the sun shining upon her golden hair until it made a halo round about her. A dozen of the servants of the house kneeled in a line opposite their mistress; for awhile Harry Esmond kept apart from these mysteries, but Doctor Tusher

showing him that the prayers read were those of the Church of all ages, and the boy's own inclination prompting him to be always as near as he might to his mistress, and to think all things she did right, from listening to the prayers in the antechamber, he came presently to kneel down with the rest of the household in the parlour; and before a couple of years my lady had made a thorough convert. Indeed, the boy loved his catechiser so much that he would have subscribed to anything she bade him, and was never tired of listening to her fond discourse and simple comments upon the book which she read to him in a voice of which it was difficult to resist the sweet persuasion, and tender appealing kindness. This friendly controversy, and the intimacy which it occasioned, bound the lad more fondly than ever to his mistress. The happiest period of all his life was this; and the young mother, with her daughter and son, and the orphan lad whom she protected, read and worked and played, and were children together. If the lady looked forward — as what fond woman does not? — towards the future, she had no plans from which Harry Esmond was left out; and a thousand and a thousand times in his passionate and impetuous way he vowed that no power should separate him from his mistress; and only asked for some chance to happen by which he might show his fidelity to her. Now, at the close of his life, as he sits and recalls in tranquillity the happy and busy scenes of it, he can think, not ungratefully, that he has been faithful to that early vow. Such a life is so simple that years may be chronicled in a few lines. But few mens' life-voyages are destined to be all prosperous,

and this calm of which we are speaking was soon to come to an end.

As Esmond grew, and observed for himself, he found of necessity much to read and think of outside that fond circle of kinsfolk who had admitted him to join hand with them. He read more books than they cared to study with him; was alone in the midst of them many a time, and passed nights over labours, futile, perhaps, but in which they could not join him. His dear mistress divined his thoughts with her usual jealous watchfulness of affection: began to forbode a time when he would escape from his home-nest; and, at his eager protestations to the contrary, would only sigh and shake her head. Before those fatal decrees in life are executed there are always secret previsions and warning omens. When everything yet seems calm, we are aware that the storm is coming. Ere the happy days were over, two, at least, of that home-party felt that they were drawing to a close; and were uneasy, and on the look-out for the cloud which was to obscure their calm.

'T was easy for Harry to see, however much his lady persisted in obedience and admiration for her husband, that my lord tired of his quiet life, and grew weary, and then testy, at those gentle bonds with which his wife would have held him. As they say the Grand Lama of Thibet is very much fatigued by his character of divinity, and yawns on his altar as his bonzes kneel and worship him, many a home-god grows heartily sick of the reverence with which his family-devotees pursue him, and sighs for freedom and for his old life, and to be off the pedestal on which his dependents would have him sit for ever, whilst they

adore him, and ply him with flowers, and hymns, and incense, and flattery; — so, after a few years of his marriage, my honest Lord Castlewood began to tire; all the high-flown raptures and devotional ceremonies with which his wife, his chief priestess, treated him, first sent him to sleep, and then drove him out of doors; for the truth must be told, that my lord was a jolly gentleman with very little of the august or divine in his nature, though his fond wife persisted in revering it, — and besides, he had to pay a penalty for this love, which persons of his disposition seldom like to defray: and, in a word, if he had a loving wife, had a very jealous and exacting one. Then he wearied of this jealousy: then he broke away from it; then came, no doubt, complaints and recriminations; then, perhaps, promises of amendment not fulfilled; then upbraidings not the more pleasant, because they were silent, and only sad looks and tearful eyes conveyed them. Then, perhaps, the pair reached that other stage which is not uncommon in married life when the woman perceives that the god of the honey-moon is a god no more; only a mortal like the rest of us, — and so she looks into her heart, and lo! *vacuæ sedes et inania arcana.* And now, supposing our lady to have a fine genius and a brilliant wit of her own, and the magic spell and infatuation removed from her which had led her to worship as a god a very ordinary mortal — and what follows? They live together, and they dine together, and they say "my dear" and "my love" as heretofore; but the man is himself, and the woman herself: that dream of love is over, as everything else is over in life; as flowers and fury, and griefs and pleasures are over.

Very likely the Lady Castlewood had ceased to adore her husband herself long before she got off her knees, or would allow her household to discontinue worshipping him. To do him justice, my lord never exacted this subservience: he laughed and joked, and drank his bottle, and swore when he was angry much too familiarly for any one pretending to sublimity; and did his best to destroy the ceremonial with which his wife chose to surround him. And it required no great conceit on young Esmond's part to see that his own brains were better than his patron's, who, indeed, never assumed any airs of superiority over the lad, or over any dependent of his, save when he was displeased, in which case he would express his mind, in oaths, very freely; and who, on the contrary, perhaps, spoiled "Parson Harry," as he called young Esmond, by constantly praising his parts, and admiring his boyish stock of learning.

It may seem ungracious in one who has received a hundred favours from his patron to speak in any but a reverential manner of his elders; but the present writer has had descendants of his own, whom he has brought up with as little as possible of the servility at present exacted by parents from children (under which mask of duty there often lurks indifference, contempt, or rebellion): and as he would have his grandsons believe or represent him to be not an inch taller than Nature has made him; so, with regard to his past acquaintances, he would speak without anger, but with truth, as far he knows it, neither extenuating nor setting down aught in malice.

So long, then, as the world moved according to Lord Castlewood's wishes, he was good-humoured

enough; of a temper naturally sprightly and easy, liking to joke, especially with his inferiors, and charmed to receive the tribute of their laughter. All exercises of the body he could perform to perfection — shooting at a mark and flying, breaking horses, riding at the ring, pitching the quoit, playing at all games with great skill. And not only did he do these things well, but he thought he did them to perfection; hence he was often tricked about horses which he pretended to know better than any jockey; was made to play at ball and billiards by sharpers who took his money; and came back from London wofully poorer each time than he went, as the state of his affairs testified, when the sudden accident came, by which his career was brought to an end.

He was fond of the parade of dress, and passed as many hours daily at his toilette as an elderly coquette. A tenth part of his day was spent in the brushing of his teeth and the oiling of his hair, which was curling and brown, and which he did not like to conceal under a perriwig, such as almost everybody of that time wore (we have the liberty of our hair back now, but powder and pomatum along with it. When, I wonder, will these monstrous poll-taxes of our age be withdrawn, and men allowed to carry their colours, black, red, or grey, as nature made them?) And as he liked her to be well dressed, his lady spared no pains in that matter to please him; indeed, she would dress her head or cut it off if he had bidden her.

It was a wonder to young Esmond, serving as page to my lord and lady, to hear, day after day, to such company as came, the same boisterous stories told by my lord, at which his lady never failed to

smile or hold down her head, and Doctor Tusher to burst out laughing at the proper point, or cry "Fye my lord, remember my cloth," but with such a faint show of resistance, that it only provoked my lord further. Lord Castlewood's stories rose by degrees, and became stronger after the ale at dinner and the bottle afterwards; my lady always taking flight after the very first glass to Church and King, and leaving the gentlemen to drink the rest of the toasts by themselves.

And as Harry Esmond was her page, he also was called from duty at this time. "My lord has lived in the army and with soldiers," she would say to the lad, "amongst whom great license is allowed. You have had a different nurture, and I trust these things will change as you grow older; not that any fault attaches to my lord, who is one of the best and most religious men in this kingdom." And very likely she believed so. 'T is strange what a man may do, and a woman yet think him an angel.

And as Esmond has taken truth for his motto, it must be owned, even with regard to that other angel, his mistress, that she had a fault of character, which flawed her perfections. With the other sex perfectly tolerant and kindly, of her own she was invariably jealous, and a proof that she had this vice is, that though she would acknowledge a thousand faults which she had not, to this which she had she could never be got to own. But if there came a woman with even a semblance of beauty to Castlewood, she was so sure to find out some wrong in her, that my lord, laughing in his jolly way, would often joke with her concerning her foible. Comely servantmaids might come for hire,

but none were taken at Castlewood. The house-keeper was old; my lady's own waiting-woman squinted, and was marked with the small-pox; the housemaids and scullion were ordinary country wenches, to whom Lady Castlewood was kind, as her nature made her to everybody almost; but as soon as ever she had to do with a pretty woman, she was cold, retiring, and haughty. The country ladies found this fault in her; and though the men all admired her, their wives and daughters complained of her coldness and airs, and said that Castlewood was pleasanter in Lady Jezebel's time (as the dowager was called), than at present. Some few were of my mistress's side. Old Lady Blenkinsop Jointure, who had been at court in King James the First's time, always took her side; and so did old Mistress Crookshank, Bishop Crookshank's daughter, of Hexton, who, with some more of their like, pronounced my lady an angel; but the pretty women were not of this mind; and the opinion of the country was that my lord was tied to his wife's apron-strings, and that she ruled over him.

The second fight which Harry Esmond had, was at fourteen years of age, with Bryan Hawkshaw, Sir John Hawkshaw's son, of Bramblebrook, who advancing this opinion that my lady was jealous, and henpecked my lord, put Harry into such a fury, that Harry fell on him, and with such rage, that the other boy, who was two years older, and by far bigger than he, had by far the worst of the assault, until it was interrupted by Doctor Tusher walking out of the dinner room.

Bryan Hawkshaw got up, bleeding at the nose, having, indeed, been surprised, as many a stronger

man might have been, by the fury of the assault upon him.

"You little bastard beggar!" he said, "I'll murder you for this!"

And indeed he was big enough.

"Bastard or not," said the other, grinding his teeth, "I have a couple of swords, and if you like to meet me, as a man, on the terrace to-night — "

And here the Doctor coming up, the colloquy of the young champions ended. Very likely, big as he was, Hawkshaw did not care to continue a fight with such a ferocious opponent as this had been.

CHAPTER VIII.

After good fortune comes evil.

SINCE my Lady Mary Wortly Montagu brought home the custom of inoculation from Turkey (a perilous practice many deem it, and only a useless rushing into the jaws of danger), I think the severity of the small-pox, that dreadful scourge of the world, has somewhat been abated in our part of it; and remember in my time hundreds of the young and beautiful who have been carried to the grave, or have only risen from their pillows frightfully scarred and disfigured by this malady. Many a sweet face hath left its roses on the bed, on which this dreadful and withering blight has laid them. In my early days this pestilence would enter a village and destroy half its inhabitants: at its approach it may well be imagined not only that the beautiful but the strongest were alarmed, and those fled who could. One day, in the year 1694 (I have good reason to remember it), Doctor Tusher ran into Castlewood House, with a face of consternation, saying that the malady had made its appearance at the blacksmith's house in the village, and that one of the maids there was down in the small-pox.

The blacksmith, besides his forge and irons for horses, had an alehouse for men, which his wife kept, and his company sate on benches before the inn door, looking at the smithy while they drank their beer. Now, there was a pretty girl at this inn, the landlord's

men called Nancy Sievewright, a bouncing, fresh-looking lass, whose face was as red as the hollyhocks over the pales of the garden behind the inn. At this time Harry Esmond was a lad of sixteen, and somehow in his walks and rambles it often happened that he fell in with Nancy Sievewright's bonny face; if he did not want something done at the blacksmith's, he would go and drink ale at the Three Castles, or find some pretext for seeing this poor Nancy. Poor thing, Harry meant or imagined no harm; and she, no doubt, as little, but the truth is they were always meeting — in the lanes, or by the brook, or at the garden-palings, or about Castlewood: it was, "Lord, Mr. Henry," and "How do you do, Nancy?" many and many a time in the week. 'T is surprising the magnetic attraction which draws people together from ever so far. I blush as I think of poor Nancy now, in a red boddice and buxom purple cheeks and a canvass petticoat; and that I devised schemes, and set traps, and made speeches in my heart, which I seldom had courage to say when in presence of that humble enchantress, who knew nothing beyond milking a cow, and opened her black eyes with wonder when I made one of my fine speeches out of Waller or Ovid. Poor Nancy! from the mist of far-off years thine honest country face beams out; and I remember thy kind voice as if I had heard it yesterday.

When Doctor Tusher brought the news that the small-pox was at the Three Castles, whither a tramper, it was said, had brought the malady, Henry Esmond's first thought was of alarm for poor Nancy, and then of shame and disquiet for the Castlewood family, lest he might have brought this infection; for the truth is

that Mr. Henry had been sitting in a back room for an hour that day, where Nancy Sievewright was with a little brother who complained of headache, and was lying stupified and crying, either in a chair by the corner of the fire, or in Nancy's lap, or on mine.

Little Lady Beatrix screamed out at Dr. Tusher's news; and my lord cried out, "God bless me!" He was a brave man and not afraid of death in any shape but this. He was very proud of his pink complexion and fair hair — but the idea of death by small-pox scared him beyond all other ends. "We will take the children and ride away to-morrow to Walcote:" this was my lord's small house, inherited from his mother, near to Winchester.

"That is the best refuge in case the disease spreads," said Dr. Tusher. "'T is awful to think of it beginning at the alehouse. Half the people of the village have visited that to-day, or the blacksmith's, which is the same thing. My clerk Simons lodges with them — I can never go into my reading-desk and have that fellow so near me. I *won't* have that man near me."

"If a parishioner dying in the small-pox sent to you, would you not go?" asked my lady, looking up from her frame of work, with her calm blue eyes.

"By the Lord, *I* wouldn't," said my lord.

"We are not in a popish country: and a sick man doth not absolutely need absolution and confession," said the Doctor. "'Tis true they are a comfort and a help to him when attainable, and to be administered with hope of good. But in a case where the life of a parish-priest in the midst of his flock is highly valuable to them, he is not called upon to risk it (and therewith the lives, future prospects, and temporal, even

spiritual welfare of his own family) for the sake of a single person, who is not very likely in a condition even to understand the religious message whereof the priest is the bringer — being uneducated and likewise stupified or delirous by disease. If your ladyship or his lordship, my excellent good friend and patron, were to take it * * *."

"God forbid!" cried my lord.

"Amen," continued Dr. Tusher. "Amen to that prayer, my very good lord! for for your sake I would lay my life down" — and, to judge from the alarmed look of the Doctor's purple face, you would have thought that that sacrifice was about to be called for instantly.

To love children, and be gentle with them, was an instinct, rather than a merit, in Henry Esmond, so much so, that he thought almost with a sort of shame of his liking for them, and of the softness into which it betrayed him; and on this day the poor fellow had not only had his young friend, the milkmaid's brother, on his knee, but had been drawing pictures, and telling stories to the little Frank Castlewood, who had occupied the same place for an hour after dinner, and was never tired of Henry's tales, and his pictures of soldiers and horses. As luck would have it, Beatrix had not on that evening taken her usual place, which generally she was glad enough to have, upon her tutor's lap. For Beatrix, from the earliest time, was jealous of every caress which was given to her little brother Frank. She would fling away even from the maternal arms, if she saw Frank had been there before her; insomuch that Lady Esmond was obliged not to show her love for her son in the presence of the little girl,

and embrace one or the other alone. She would turn pale and red with rage if she caught signs of intelligence or affection between Frank and his mother; would sit apart, and not speak for a whole night, if she thought the boy had a better fruit or a larger cake than hers; would fling away a ribbon if he had one; and from the earliest age, sitting up in her little chair by the great fireplace opposite to the corner where Lady Castlewood commonly sate at her embroidery, would utter infantine sarcasms about the favour shown to her brother. These, if spoken in the presence of Lord Castlewood, tickled and amused his humour; he would pretend to love Frank best, and dandle and kiss him, and roar with laughter at Beatrix's jealousy. But the truth is, my lord did not often witness these scenes, nor very much trouble the quiet fireside at which his lady passed many long evenings. My lord was hunting all day when the season admitted; he frequented all the cock-fights and fairs in the country, and would ride twenty miles to see a main fought, or two clowns break their heads at a cudgelling match; and he liked better to sit in his parlour drinking ale and punch with Jack and Tom, than in his wife's drawing-room; whither, if he came, he brought only too often blood-shot eyes, a hiccupping voice, and a reeling gait. The management of the house and the property, the care of the few tenants and the village poor, and the accounts of the estate were in the hands of his lady and her young secretary, Harry Esmond. My lord took charge of the stables, the kennel, and the cellar — and he filled this and emptied it too.

So, it chanced that upon this very day, when poor Harry Esmond had had the blacksmith's son, and the

peer's son, alike upon his knee, little Beatrix, who would come to her tutor willingly enough with her book and her writing, had refused him, seeing the place occupied by her brother, and, luckily for her, had sate at the further end of the room, away from him, playing with a spaniel dog, which she had (and for which, by fits and starts, she would take a great affection), and talking at Harry Esmond over her shoulder, as she pretended to caress the dog, saying, that Fido would love her, and she would love Fido, and nothing but Fido all her life.

When then the news was brought that the little boy at the Three Castles was ill with the small-pox, poor Harry Esmond felt a shock of alarm, not so much for himself as for his mistress's son, whom he might have brought into peril. Beatrix who had pouted sufficiently (and who whenever a stranger appeared began, from infancy almost, to play off little graces to catch his attention), her brother being now gone to bed, was for taking her place upon Esmond's knee: for, though the Doctor was very obsequious to her, she did not like him, because he had thick boots and dirty hands (the pert young Miss said) and because she hated learning the catechism.

But as she advanced towards Esmond from the corner where she had been sulking, he started back and placed the great chair on which he was sitting between him and her — saying in the French language to Lady Castlewood, with whom the young lad had read much and whom he had perfected in this tongue — "Madam, the child must not approach me, I must tell you that I was at the blacksmith's to-day, and had his little boy upon my lap."

"Where you took my son afterwards," Lady Castlewood said, very angry and turning red. "I thank you, Sir, for giving him such company. Beatrix," she said in English, "I forbid you to touch Mr. Esmond. Come away, child — Come to your room. Come to your room — I wish your reverence good-night — and you, Sir, had you not better go back to your friends at the alehouse?" Her eyes, ordinarily so kind, darted flashes of anger as she spoke; and she tossed up her head (which hung down commonly) with the mien of a princess.

"Hey-day!" says my lord, who was standing by the fireplace — indeed he was in the position to which he generally came by that hour of the evening — "Hey-day! Rachel, what are you in a passion about? Ladies ought never to be in a passion. Ought they, Doctor Tusher? though it does good to see Rachel in a passion — Damme, Lady Castlewood, you look dev'lish handsome in a passion."

"It is, my Lord, because Mr. Henry Esmond, having nothing to do with his time here, and not having a taste for our company, has been to the alehouse, where he has *some friends*."

My lord burst out with a laugh and an oath — "You young slyboots, you 've been at Nancy Sieve-wright. D— the young hypocrite, who 'd have thought it in him? I say Tusher, he 's been after —"

"Enough, my Lord," said my lady, "don't insult me with this talk."

"Upon my word," said poor Harry, ready to cry with shame and mortification, "the honour of that young person is perfectly unstained for me."

"O, of course, of course," says my lord, more and

more laughing and tipsy. "Upon his *honour*, Doctor — Nancy Sieve — . . ."

"Take Mistress Beatrix to bed," my lady cried at this moment to Mrs. Tucker her woman, who came in with her ladyship's tea. "Put her into my room — no, into yours," she added quickly. "Go, my child: go, I say: not a word!" And Beatrix, quite surprised at so sudden a tone of authority from one who was seldom accustomed to raise her voice, went out of the room with a scared countenance and waited even to burst out a-crying, until she got to the door with Mrs. Tucker.

For once her mother took little heed of her sobbing, and continued to speak eagerly — "My Lord," she said, "this young man — your dependent — told me just now in French — he was ashamed to speak in his own language, — that he had been at the alehouse all day, where he has had that little wretch who is now ill of the small-pox on his knee. And he comes home reeking from that place — yes, reeking from it — and takes my boy into his lap without shame, and sits down by me, yes, by *me*. He may have killed Frank for what I know — killed our child. Why was he brought in to disgrace our house? Why is he here? Let him go — let him go, I say, to-night, and pollute the place no more."

She had never once uttered a syllable of unkindness to Harry Esmond; and her cruel words smote the poor boy, so that he stood for some moments bewildered with grief and rage at the injustice of such a stab from such a hand. He turned quite white from red, which he had been.

"I cannot help my birth, Madam," he said, "nor

my other misfortune. And as for your boy, if — if my coming nigh to him pollutes him now, it was not so always. Good-night, my Lord. Heaven bless you and yours for your goodness to me. I have tired her ladyship's kindness out, and I will go;" and sinking down on his knee, Harry Esmond took the rough hand of his benefactor and kissed it.

"He wants to go to the alehouse — let him go," cried my lady.

"I'm damned if he shall," said my lord. "I didn't think you could be so damned ungrateful, Rachel."

Her reply was to burst into a flood of tears, and to quit the room with a rapid glance at Harry Esmond. As my lord not heeding them, and still in great good-humour, raised up his young client from his kneeling posture (for a thousand kindnesses had caused the lad to revere my lord as a father), and put his broad hand on Harry Esmond's shoulder.

"She was always so," my lord said; "the very notion of a woman drives her mad. I took to liquor on that very account, by Jove, for no other reason than that; for she can't be jealous of a beer-barrel or a bottle of rum, can she, Doctor? D— it, look at the maids —just look at the maids in the house" (my lord pronounced all the words together — just-look-at-the-maze-in-the-house: jever-see-such-maze?). "You wouldn't take a wife out of Castlewood now, would you, Doctor;" and my lord burst out laughing.

The Doctor, who had been looking at my Lord Castlewood from under his eyelids, said, "But joking apart, and, my Lord, as a divine, I cannot treat the subject in a jocular light, nor, as a pastor of this

congregation, look with anything but sorrow at the idea of so very young a sheep going astray."

"Sir," said young Esmond, bursting out indignantly, "she told me that you yourself were a horrid old man, and had offered to kiss her in the dairy."

"For shame, Henry," cried Doctor Tusher, turning as red as a turkey-cock, while my lord continued to roar with laughter. "If you listen to the falsehoods of an abandoned girl — "

"She is as honest as any woman in England, and as pure for me," cried out Henry, "and as kind, and as good. For shame on you to malign her!"

"Far be it from me to do so," cried the Doctor. "Heaven grant I may be mistaken in the girl, and in you, Sir, who have a truly *precocious* genius; but that is not the point at issue at present. It appears that the small-pox broke out in the little boy at the Three Castles; that it was on him when you visited the alehouse, for your *own* reasons; and that you sate with the child for some time, and immediately afterwards with my young lord." The Doctor raised his voice as he spoke, and looked towards my lady, who had now come back, looking very pale, with a handkerchief in her hand.

"This is all very true, Sir," said Lady Esmond, looking at the young man.

"'T is to be feared that he may have brought the infection with him."

"From the alehouse — yes," said my lady.

"D— it, I forgot when I collared you, boy," cried my lord, stepping back. "Keep off, Harry, my boy; there 's no good in running into the wolf's jaws, you know."

My lady looked at him with some surprise, and instantly advancing to Henry Esmond, took his hand. "I beg your pardon, Henry," she said; "I spoke very unkindly. I have no right to interfere with you — with your — "

My lord broke out into an oath. "Can't you leave the boy alone, my Lady?" She looked a little red, and faintly pressed the lad's hand as she dropped it.

"There is no use, my Lord," she said; "Frank was on his knee as he was making pictures, and was running constantly from Henry to me. The evil is done, if any."

"Not with me, damme," cried my lord. "I 've been smoaking" — and he lighted his pipe again with a coal — "and it keeps off infection; and as the disease is in the village — plague take it — I would have you leave it. We 'll go to-morrow to Walcote, my Lady."

"I have no fear," said my lady; "I may have had it as an infant, it broke out in our house then; and when four of my sisters had it at home, two years before our marriage, I escaped it, and two of my dear sisters died."

"I won't run the risk," said my lord; "I 'm as bold as any man, but I 'll not bear that."

"Take Beatrix with you and go," said my lady. "For us the mischief is done; and Tucker can wait upon us, who has had the disease."

"You take care to choose 'em ugly enough," said my lord, at which her ladyship hung down her head and looked foolish: and my lord, calling away Tusher, bade him come to the oak parlour and have a pipe. The Doctor made a low bow to her ladyship (of which

salams he was profuse), and walked off on his creaking square-toes after his patron.

When the lady and the young man were alone there was a silence of some moments, during which he stood at the fire, looking rather vacantly at the dying embers, whilst her ladyship busied herself with her tambour-frame and needles.

"I am sorry," she said, after a pause, in a hard, dry voice, — "I *repeat* I am sorry that I showed myself so ungrateful for the safety of my son. It was not at all my wish that you should leave us, I am sure, unless you found pleasure elsewhere. But you must perceive, Mr. Esmond, that at your age, and with your tastes, it is impossible that you can continue to stay upon the intimate footing in which you have been in this family. You have wished to go to the University, and I think 't is quite as well that you should be sent thither. I did not press this matter, thinking you a child, as you are, indeed, in years — quite a child; and I should never have thought of treating you otherwise until — until these *circumstances* came to light. And I shall beg my lord to despatch you as quick as possible; and will go on with Frank's learning as well as I can, (I owe my father thanks for a little grounding, and you, I 'm sure, for much that you have taught me,) — and — and I wish you a good-night, Mr. Esmond."

And with this she dropped a stately curtsey, and, taking her candle, went away through the tapestry door, which led to her apartments. Esmond stood by the fire-place, blankly staring after her. Indeed, he scarce seemed to see until she was gone; and then her image was impressed upon him, and remained for ever

fixed upon his memory. He saw her retreating, the taper lighting up her marble face, her scarlet lip quivering, and her shining golden hair. He went to his own room, and to bed, where he tried to read, as his custom was; but he never knew what he was reading until afterwards he remembered the appearance of the letters of the book (it was in Montaigne's Essays), and the events of the day passed before him — that is, of the last hour of the day; for as for the morning, and the poor milkmaid yonder, he never so much as once thought. And he could not get to sleep until day-light, and woke with a violent headache, and quite unrefreshed.

He had brought the contagion with him from the Three Castles sure enough, and was presently laid up with the small-pox, which spared the Hall no more than it did the cottage.

CHAPTER IX.

I have the small-pox, and prepare to leave Castlewood.

WHEN Harry Esmond passed through the crisis of that malady, and returned to health again, he found that little Frank Esmond had also suffered and rallied after the disease, and the lady his mother was down with it, with a couple more of the household. "It was a Providence, for which we all ought to be thankful," Doctor Tusher said, "that my lady and her son were spared, while Death carried off the poor domestics of the house;" and rebuked Harry for asking, in his simple way, — for which ought we to be thankful — that the servants were killed, or the gentlefolks were saved? Nor could young Esmond agree in the Doctor's vehement protestations to my lady, when he visited her during her convalescence that the malady had not in the least impaired her charms, and had not been churl enough to injure the fair features of the Viscountess of Castlewood, whereas in spite of these fine speeches, Harry thought that her ladyship's beauty was very much injured by the small-pox. When the marks of the disease cleared away, they did not, it is true, leave furrows or scars on her face (except one, perhaps, on her forehead over her left eyebrow); but the delicacy of her rosy colour and complexion were gone: her eyes had lost their brilliancy, her hair fell, and her face looked older. It was as if a coarse hand had rubbed off the delicate tints of that sweet picture, and brought

it, as one has seen unskilful painting-cleaners do, to the dead colour. Also, it must be owned, that for a year or two after the malady, her ladyship's nose was swollen and redder.

There would be no need to mention these trivialities, but that they actually influenced many lives, as trifles will in the world where a gnat often plays a greater part than an elephant, and a mole-hill as we know in King William's case, can upset an empire. When Tusher in his courtly way (at which Harry Esmond always chafed and spoke scornfully) vowed and protested that my lady's face was none the worse — the lad broke out and said "It *is* worse: and my mistress is not near so handsome as she was;" on which poor Lady Esmond gave a rueful smile, and a look into a little Venice glass she had, which showed her I suppose that what the stupid boy said was only too true, for she turned away from the glass and her eyes filled with tears.

The sight of these in Esmond's heart always created a sort of rage of pity, and seeing them on the face of the lady whom he loved best, the young blunderer sank down on his knees, and besought her to pardon him, saying that he was a fool and an idiot, that he was a brute to make such a speech, he who had caused her malady, and Doctor Tusher told him that a bear he was indeed, and a bear he would remain, at which speech poor young Esmond was so dumb-stricken that he did not even growl.

"He is *my* bear, and I will not have him baited, Doctor," my lady said, patting her hand kindly on the boy's head, as he was still kneeling at her feet.

"How your hair has come off! And mine, too," she added with another sigh.

"It is not for myself that I cared," my lady said to Harry, when the Parson had taken his leave — "but *am* I very much changed? Alas! I fear 't is too true."

"Madam, you have the dearest, and kindest, and sweetest face in the world, I think;" the lad said, and indeed he thought and thinks so.

"Will my lord think so when he comes back?" the lady asked with a sigh, and another look at her Venice glass. "Suppose he should think as you do, Sir, that I am hideous — yes you said hideous — he will cease to care for me. 'T is all men care for in women, our little beauty. Why did he select me from among my sisters? 'T was only for that. We reign but for a day or two: and be sure that Vashti knew Esther was coming."

"Madam," said Mr. Esmond, "Ahasuerus was the Grand Turk, and to change was the manner of his country and according to his law."

"You are all Grand Turks for that matter," said my lady, "or would be if you could. Come Frank, come my child. You are well, praised be Heaven. *Your* locks are not thinned by this dreadful small-pox: nor your poor face scarred — is it, my angel?"

Frank began to shout and whimper at the idea of such a misfortune. From the very earliest time the young lord had been taught to admire his beauty by his mother: and esteemed it as highly as ny reigning toast valued hers.

One day as he himself was recovering from his fever and illness, a pang of something like shame shot

across young Esmond's breast, as he remembered that he had never once during his illness, given a thought to the poor girl at the smithy, whose red cheeks but a month ago he had been so eager to see. Poor Nancy! her cheeks had shared the fate of roses, and were withered now. She had taken the illness on the same day with Esmond — she and her brother were both dead of the small-pox, and buried under the Castlewood yew-trees. There was no bright face looking now from the garden, or to cheer the old smith at his lonely fireside. Esmond would have liked to have kissed her in her shroud, (like the lass in Mr. Prior's pretty poem:) but she rested many foot below the ground, when Esmond after his malady first trod on it.

Doctor Tusher brought the news of this calamity, about which Harry Esmond longed to ask, but did not like. He said almost the whole village had been stricken with the pestilence; seventeen persons were dead of it, among them mentioning the names of poor Nancy and her little brother. He did not fail to say how thankful we survivors ought to be. It being this man's business to flatter and make sermons, it must be owned he was most industrious in it, and was doing the one or the other all day.

And so Nancy was gone; and Harry Esmond blushed that he had not a single tear for her, and fell to composing an elegy in Latin verses over the rustic little beauty. He bade the Dryads mourn and the river-nymphs deplore her. As her father followed the calling of Vulcan, he said that surely she was like a daughter of Venus, though Sievewright's wife was an ugly shrew, as he remembered to have heard after-

wards. He made a long face, but, in truth, felt scarcely more sorrowful than a mute at a funeral. These first passions of men and women are mostly abortive; and are dead almost before they are born. Esmond could repeat, to his last day, some of the doggrel lines in which his muse bewailed his pretty lass; not without shame, to remember how bad the verses were, and how good he thought them; how false the grief, and yet how he was rather proud of it. 'T is an error, surely, to talk of the simplicity of youth. I think no persons are more hypocritical, and have a more affected behaviour to one another, than the young. They deceive themselves and each other with artifices that do not impose upon men of the world; and so we get to understand truth better, and grow simpler as we grow older.

When my lady heard of the fate which had befallen poor Nancy, she said nothing so long as Tusher was by, but when he was gone, she took Harry Esmond's hand and said:

"Harry, I beg your pardon for those cruel words I used on the night you were taken ill. I am shocked at the fate of the poor creature, and am sure that nothing had happened of that with which, in my anger, I charged you. And the very first day we go out, you must take me to the blacksmith, and we must see if there is anything I can do to console the poor old man. Poor man! to lose both his children! What should I do without mine!"

And this was, indeed, the very first walk which my lady took, leaning on Esmond's arm, after her illness. But her visit brought no consolation to the old father; and he showed no softness, or desire to speak.

"The Lord gave and took away," he said; and he knew what His servant's duty was. He wanted for nothing — less now than ever before, as there were fewer mouths to feed. He wished her ladyship and Master Esmond good morning — he had grown tall in his illness, and was but very little marked; and with this, and a surly bow, he went in from the smithy to the house, leaving my lady somewhat silenced and shamefaced, at the door. He had a handsome stone put up for his two children, which may be seen in Castlewood church-yard to this very day; and before a year was out, his own name was upon the stone. In the presence of Death, that sovereign ruler, a woman's coquetry is scared; and her jealousy will hardly pass the boundaries of that grim kingdom. 'T is entirely of the earth, that passion, and expires in the cold blue air, beyond our sphere.

At length, when the danger was quite over, it was announced that my lord and his daughter would return. Esmond well remembered the day. The lady, his mistress, was in a flurry of fear: before my lord came, she went into her room, and returned from it with reddened cheeks. Her fate was about to be decided. Her beauty was gone — was her reign, too, over? A minute would say. My lord came riding over the bridge — he could be seen from the great window, clad in scarlet, and mounted on his grey hackney — his little daughter ambled by him in a bright riding-dress of blue, on a shining chestnut horse. My lady leaned against the great mantelpiece, looking on, with one hand on her heart — she seemed only the more pale for those red marks on either cheek. She put her handkerchief to her eyes, and withdrew it, laughing

hysterically — the cloth was quite red with the rouge when she took it away. She ran to her room again, and came back with pale cheeks and red eyes — her son in her hand — just as my lord entered, accompanied by young Esmond, who had gone out to meet his protector, and to hold his stirrup as he descended from horseback.

"What, Harry, boy!" my lord said, good-naturedly, "you look as gaunt as a greyhound. The small-pox hasn't improved your beauty, and your side of the house hadn't never too much of it — ho, ho!"

And he laughed, and sprang to the ground with no small agility, looking handsome and red, with a jolly face and brown hair, like a beefeater; Esmond kneeling again, as soon as his patron had descended, performed his homage, and then went to greet the little Beatrix, and help her from her horse.

"Fie! how yellow you look," she said; "and there are one, two, red holes in your face;" which, indeed, was very true; Harry Esmond's harsh countenance bearing, as long as it continued to be a human face, the marks of the disease.

My lord laughed again, in high good humour.

"D — it!" he said, with one of his usual oaths, "the little slut sees everything. She saw the Dowager's paint t'other day, and asked her why she wore that red stuff — didn't you, Trix? and the tower; and St. James's; and the play; and the Prince George, and the Princess Ann — didn't you, Trix?"

"They are both very fat, and smelt of brandy," the child said.

Papa roared with laughing.

"Brandy!" he said. "And how do you know, Miss Pert?"

"Because your lordship smells of it after supper, when I embrace you before you go to bed," said the young lady, who, indeed, was as pert as her father said, and looked as beautiful a little gipsy as eyes ever gazed on.

"And now for my lady," said my lord, going up the stairs, and passing under the tapestry curtain that hung before the drawing-room door. Esmond remembered that noble figure handsomely arrayed in scarlet. Within the last few months he himself had grown from a boy to be a man, and with his figure, his thoughts had shot up, and grown manly.

My lady's countenance, of which Harry Esmond was accustomed to watch the changes, and with a solicitous affection to note and interpret the signs of gladness or care, wore a sad and depressed look for many weeks after her lord's return; during which it seemed as if, by caresses and entreaties, she strove to win him back from some ill-humour he had, and which he did not choose to throw off. In her eagerness to please him she practised a hundred of those arts which had formerly charmed him, but which seemed now to have lost their potency. Her songs did not amuse him; and she hushed them and the children when in his presence. My lord sat silent at his dinner, drinking greatly, his lady opposite to him looking furtively at his face, though also speechless. Her silence annoyed him as much as her speech; and he would peevishly, and with an oath, ask her why she held her tongue and looked so glum, or he would roughly check her when speaking, and bid her not talk non-

sense. It seemed as if, since his return, nothing she could do or say could please him.

When a master and mistress are at strife in a house, the subordinates in the family take the one side or the other. Harry Esmond stood in so great fear of my lord, that he would run a league barefoot to do a message for him; but his attachment for Lady Esmond was such a passion of grateful regard, that to spare her a grief, or to do her a service, he would have given his life daily; and it was by the very depth and intensity of this regard that he began to divine how unhappy his adored lady's life was, and that a secret care (for she never spoke of her anxieties) was weighing upon her.

Can any one, who has passed through the world and watched the nature of men and women there, doubt what had befallen her? I have seen, to be sure, some people carry down with them into old age the actual bloom of their youthful love, and I know that Mr. Thomas Parr lived to be a hundred and sixty years old. But, for all that, threescore and ten is the age of men, and few get beyond it; and 't is certain that a man who marries for mere *beaux yeux*, as my lord did, considers his part of the contract at end when the woman ceases to fulfil hers, and his love does not survive her beauty. I know 't is often otherwise, I say; and can think (as most men in their own experience may) of many a house, where, lighted in early years, the sainted lamp of love hath never been extinguished; but so, there is Mr. Parr, and so there is the great giant at the fair that is eight feet high — exceptions to men — and that poor lamp whereof I speak that lights at first the nuptial chamber is ex-

tinguished by a hundred winds and draughts down the chimney, or sputters out for want of feeding. And then — and then it is Chloe, in the dark, stark awake, and Strephon snoring unheeding; or *vice versâ*, 't is poor Strephon that has married a heartless jilt and awoke out of that absurd vision of conjugal felicity, which was to last for ever, and is over like any other dream. One and other has made his bed, and so must lie in it, until that final day, when life ends, and they sleep separate.

About this time young Esmond, who had a knack of stringing verses, turned some of Ovid's epistles into rhymes, and brought them to his lady for her delectation. Those which treated of forsaken women touched her immensely, Harry remarked; and when Œnone called after Paris, and Medea bade Jason come back again, the lady of Castlewood sighed and said she thought that part of the verses was the most pleasing. Indeed, she would have chopped up the Dean, her old father, in order to bring her husband back again. But her beautiful Jason was gone, as beautiful Jasons will go, and the poor enchantress had never a spell to keep him.

My lord was only sulky as long as his wife's anxious face or behaviour seemed to upbraid him. When she had got to master these, and to show an outwardly cheerful countenance and behaviour, her husband's good humour returned partially, and he swore and stormed no longer at dinner, but laughed sometimes and yawned unrestrainedly; absenting himself often from home, inviting more company thither, passing the greater part of his days in the hunting-field, or over the bottle as before; but, with this dif-

ference, that the poor wife could no longer see now, as she had done formerly, the light of love kindled in his eyes. He was with her, but that flame was out; and that once welcome beacon no more shone there.

What were this lady's feelings when forced to admit the truth whereof her foreboding glass had given her only too true warning, that with her beauty her reign had ended, and the days of her love were over? What does a seaman do in a storm if mast and rudder are carried away? He ships a jurymast, and steers as he best can with an oar. What happens if your roof falls in a tempest? After the first stun of the calamity the sufferer starts up, gropes around to see that the children are safe, and puts them under a shed out of the rain. If the palace burns down, you take shelter in the barn. What man's life is not overtaken by one or more of these tornadoes that send us out of the course, and fling us on rocks to shelter as best we may?

When Lady Castlewood found that her great ship had gone down, she began as best she might, after she had rallied from the effect of the loss, to put out small ventures of happiness; and hope for little gains and returns, as a merchant on 'Change, *indocilis pauperiem pati*, having lost his thousands, embarks a few guineas upon the next ship. She laid out her all upon her children, indulging them beyond all measure, as was inevitable with one of her kindness of disposition; giving all her thoughts to their welfare, — learning, so that she might teach them, and improving her own many natural gifts and feminine accomplishments that she might impart them to her young ones.

To be doing good for some one else, is the life of most good women. They are exuberant of kindness, as it were, and must impart it to some one. She made herself a good scholar of French, Italian and Latin, having been grounded in these by her father in her youth: hiding these gifts from her husband out of fear, perhaps, that they should offend him, for my lord was no bookman, — pish'd and psha'd at the notion of learned ladies, and would have been angry that his wife could construe out of a Latin book of which he could scarce understand two words. Young Esmond was usher or house tutor, under her or over her, as it might happen. During my lord's many absences, these schooldays would go on uninterruptedly: the mother and daughter learning with surprising quickness; the latter by fits and starts only, and as suited her wayward humour. As for the little lord, it must be owned that he took after his father in the matter of learning, — liked marbles, and play, and the great horse, and the little one which his father brought him, and on which he took him out a-hunting, a great deal better than Corderius and Lily; marshalled the village boys, and had a little court of them, already flogging them, and domineering over them with a fine imperious spirit that made his father laugh when he beheld it, and his mother fondly warn him. The cook had a son, the woodman had two, the big lad at the porter's lodge took his cuffs and his orders. Doctor Tusher said he was a young nobleman of gallant spirit; and Harry Esmond, who was his tutor, and eight years his little lordship's senior, had hard work sometimes to keep his own temper, and hold his authority over his rebellious little chief and kinsman.

In a couple of years after that calamity had befallen which had robbed Lady Castlewood of a little — a very little — of her beauty, and her careless husband's heart (if the truth must be told, my lady had found not only that her reign was over, but that her successor was appointed, a Princess of a noble house in Drury Lane somewhere, who was installed and visited by my lord at the town eight miles off — *pudet hæc opprobria dicere nobis*) — a great change had taken place in her mind, which, by struggles only known to herself, at least never mentioned to any one, and unsuspected by the person who caused the pain she endured — had been schooled into such a condition as she could not very likely have imagined possible a score of months since, before her misfortunes had begun.

She had oldened in that time, as people do who suffer silently great mental pain: and learned much that she had never suspected before. She was taught by that better teacher Misfortune. A child, the mother of other children, but two years back, her lord was a God to her; his words her law; his smile her sunshine; his lazy common-places listened to eagerly, as if they were words of wisdom — all his wishes and freaks obeyed with a servile devotion. She had been my lord's chief slave and blind worshipper. Some women bear farther than this, and submit not only to neglect but to unfaithfulness too — but here this lady's allegiance had failed her. Her spirit rebelled and disowned any more obedience. First she had to bear in secret the passion of losing the adored object; then to get a farther initiation, and to find this worshipped being was but a clumsy idol: then to admit the silent

truth, that it was she was superior, and not the monarch her master: that she had thoughts which his brains could never master, and was the better of the two; quite separate from my lord although tied to him, and bound as almost all people (save a very happy few) to work all her life alone. My lord sat in his chair, laughing his laugh, cracking his joke, his face flushing with wine — my lady in her place over against him — he never suspecting that his superior was there, in the calm resigned lady cold of manner, with downcast eyes. When he was merry in his cups, he would make jokes about her coldness, and, "Damn it, now my lady is gone, we will have t'other bottle," he would say. He was frank enough in telling his thoughts, such as they were. There was little mystery about my lord's words or actions. His fair Rosamond did not live in a labyrinth, like the lady of Mr. Addison's opera, but paraded with painted cheeks and a tipsy retinue in the country town. Had she a mind to be revenged, Lady Castlewood could have found the way to her rival's house easily enough; and if she had come with bowl and dagger would have been routed off the ground by the enemy, with a volley of Billingsgate, which the fair person always kept by her.

Meanwhile, it has been said, that for Harry Esmond his benefactress's sweet face had lost none of its charms. It had always the kindest of looks and smiles for him — smiles, not so gay and artless perhaps as those which Lady Castlewood had formerly worn, when, a child herself, playing with her children, her husband's pleasure and authority were all she thought of; but out of her griefs and cares, as will

happen I think when these trials fall upon a kindly heart, and are not too unbearable, grew up a number of thoughts and excellencies which had never come into existence, had not her sorrow and misfortunes engendered them. Sure, occasion is the father of most that is good in us. As you have seen the awkward fingers and clumsy tools of a prisoner cut and fashion the most delicate little pieces of carved work; or achieve the most prodigious underground labours, and cut through walls of masonry, and saw iron bars and fetters; 't is misfortune that awakens ingenuity, or fortitude, or endurance, in hearts where these qualities had never come to life but for the circumstance which gave them a being.

"'T was after Jason left her, no doubt," Lady Castlewood once said with one of her smiles to young Esmond (who was reading to her a version of certain lines out of Euripides) "that Medea became a learned woman, and a great enchantress."

"And she could conjure the stars out of Heaven," the young tutor added, "but she could not bring Jason back again."

"What do you mean?" asked my lady, very angry.

"Indeed I mean nothing," said the other, "save what I have read in books. What should I know about such matters? I have seen no woman save you and little Beatrix, and the parson's wife and my late mistress, and your ladyship's women here."

"The men who wrote your books," says my lady, "your Horaces, and Ovids, and Virgils, as far as I know of them, all thought ill of us, as all the heroes they wrote about used us basely. We were bred to be slaves always; and even of our own times, as you

are still the only lawgivers, I think our sermons seem to say that the best woman is she who bears her master's chains most gracefully. 'T is a pity there are no nunneries permitted by our church: Beatrix and I would fly to one, and end our days in peace there away from you."

"And is there no slavery in a convent?" says Esmond.

"At least if women are slaves there, no one sees them," answered the lady. "They don't work in street-gangs with the public to jeer them: and if they suffer, suffer in private. Here comes my lord home from hunting. Take away the books. My lord does not love to see them. Lessons are over for to-day, Mr. Tutor." And with a curtsey and a smile she would end this sort of colloquy.

Indeed, "Mr. Tutor," as my lady called Esmond, had now business enough on his hands in Castlewood House. He had three pupils, his lady and her two children, at whose lessons she would always be present: besides writing my lord's letters, and arranging his accompts for him — when these could be got from Esmond's indolent patron.

Of the pupils the two young people were but lazy scholars, and as my lady would admit no discipline such as was then in use, my lord's son only learned what he liked, which was but little, and never to his life's end could be got to construe more than six lines of Virgil. Mistress Beatrix chattered French prettily from a very early age; and sang sweetly, but this was from her mother's teaching — not Harry Esmond's, who could scarce distinguish between Green Sleeves and Lillabullero; although he had no greater delight in life

than to hear the ladies sing. He sees them now, (will he ever forget them?) as they used to sit together of the summer evenings — the two golden heads over the page — the child's little hand and the mother's beating the time, with their voices rising and falling in unison.

But if the children were careless, 't was a wonder how eagerly the mother learned from her young tutor — and taught him too. The happiest instinctive faculty was this lady's — a faculty for discerning latent beauties and hidden graces of books, especially books of poetry, as in a walk she would spy out field-flowers and make posies of them, such as no other hand could. She was a critic not by reason but by feeling; the sweetest commentator of those books they read together: and the happiest hours of young Esmond's life, perhaps, were those past in the company of this kind mistress and her children.

These happy days were to end soon, however; and it was by the Lady Castlewood's own decree that they were brought to a conclusion. It happened about Christmas-time, Harry Esmond being now past sixteen years of age, that his old comrade, adversary, and friend, Tom Tusher, returned from his school in London, a fair, well-grown, and sturdy lad, who was about to enter College, with an exhibition from his school, and a prospect of after promotion in the church. Tom Tusher's talk was of nothing but Cambridge now: and the boys, who were good friends, examined each other eagerly about their progress in books. Tom had learned some Greek and Hebrew, besides Latin in which he was pretty well skilled, and also had given himself to mathematical studies under his father's gui-

dance, who was a proficient in those sciences, of which Esmond knew nothing, nor could he write Latin so well as Tom, though he could talk it better, having been taught by his dear friend the Jesuit Father, for whose memory the lad ever retained the warmest affection, reading his books, keeping his swords clean in the little crypt where the Father had shown them to Esmond on the night of his visit; and often of a night, sitting in the chaplain's room, which he inhabited, over his books, his verses, and rubbish, with which the lad occupied himself, he would look up at the window thinking he wished it might open and let in the good Father. He had come and passed away like a dream: but for the swords and books Harry might almost think the Father was an imagination of his mind — and for two letters which had come to him, one from abroad full of advice and affection, another soon after he had been confirmed by the Bishop of Hexton, in which Father Holt deplored his falling away. But Harry Esmond felt so confident now of his being in the right, and of his own powers as a casuist, that he thought he was able to face the Father himself in argument, and possibly convert him.

To work upon the faith of her young pupil, Esmond's kind mistress sent to the library of her father the Dean, who had been distinguished in the disputes of the late king's reign; and, an old soldier now, had hung up his weapons of controversy. These he took down from his shelves willingly for young Esmond, whom he benefitted by his own personal advice and instruction. It did not require much persuasion to induce the boy to worship with his beloved mistress. And the good old nonjuring Dean flattered himself

with a conversion which in truth was owing to a much gentler and fairer persuader.

Under her ladyship's kind eyes (my lord's being sealed in sleep pretty generally), Esmond read many volumes of the works of the famous British Divines of the last age, and was familiar with Wake and Sherlock, with Stillingfleet and Patrick. His mistress never tired to listen or to read, to pursue the text with fond comments, to urge those points which her fancy dwelt on most, or her reason deemed most important. Since the death of her father the Dean, this lady hath admitted a certain latitude of theological reading, which her orthodox father would never have allowed; his favourite writers appealing more to reason and antiquity than to the passions or imaginations of their readers, so that the works of Bishop Taylor, nay, those of Mr. Baxter and Mr. Law, have, in reality, found more favour with my Lady Castlewood, than the severer volumes of our great English schoolmen.

In later life, at the University, Esmond reopened the controversy, and pursued it in a very different manner, when his patrons had determined for him that he was to embrace the ecclesiastical life. But though his mistress's heart was in this calling, his own never was much. After that first fervour of simple devotion, which his beloved Jesuit-priest had inspired in him, speculative theology took but little hold upon the young man's mind. When his early credulity was disturbed, and his saints and virgins taken out of his worship, to rank little higher than the divinities of Olympus, his belief became acquiescence rather than ardour; and he made his mind up to assume the cas-

sock and bands, as another man does to wear a breastplate and jackboots, or to mount a merchant's desk, for a livelihood, and from obedience and necessity, rather than from choice. There were scores of such men in Mr. Esmond's time at the universities, who were going to the church with no better calling than his.

When Thos. Tusher was gone, a feeling of no small depression and disquiet fell upon young Esmond, of which, though he did not complain, his kind mistress must have divined the cause; for soon after she showed not only that she understood the reason of Harry's melancholy, but could provide a remedy for it. Her habit was thus to watch, unobservedly, those to whom duty or affection bound her, and to prevent their designs, or to fulfil them, when she had the power. It was this lady's disposition to think kindnesses, and devise silent bounties, and to scheme benevolence for those about her. We take such goodness, for the most part, as if it was our due; the Marys who bring ointment for our feet get but little thanks. Some of us never feel this devotion at all, or are moved by it to gratitude or acknowledgment; others only recall it years after, when the days are past in which those sweet kindnesses were spent on us, and we offer back our return for the debt by a poor tardy payment of tears. Then forgotten tones of love recur to us, and kind glances shine out of the past — O so bright and clear! — O so longed after! — because they are out of reach; as holiday music from withinside a prison wall — or sunshine seen through the bars; more prized because unattainable — more bright because of the contrast of present darkness and solitude, whence there is no escape.

All the notice, then, which Lady Castlewood seemed to take of Harry Esmond's melancholy, upon Tom Tusher's departure, was by a gaiety, unusual to her, to attempt to dispel his gloom. She made his three scholars (herself being the chief one), more cheerful than ever they had been before, and more docile too, all of them learning and reading much more than they had been accustomed to do. "For who knows," said the lady, "what may happen, and whether we may be able to keep such a learned tutor long?"

Frank Esmond said, he for his part did not want to learn any more, and Cousin Harry might shut up his book whenever he liked, if he would come out a-fishing; and little Beatrix declared, she would send for Tom Tusher, and *he* would be glad enough to come to Castlewood, if Harry chose to go away.

At last comes a messenger from Winchester one day, bearer of a letter, with a great black seal, from the Dean there, to say that his sister was dead, and had left her fortune of £2000 among her six nieces, the Dean's daughters; and many a time since has Harry Esmond recalled the flushed face and eager look wherewith, after this intelligence, his kind lady regarded him. She did not pretend to any grief about the deceased relative, from whom she and her family had been many years parted.

When my lord heard of the news, he also did not make any very long face. "The money will come very handy to furnish the music-room and the cellar, which is getting low, and buy your ladyship a coach and a couple of horses that will do indifferent to ride or for the coach. And Beatrix, you shall have a spinnet; and Frank, you shall have a little horse from Hexton

Fair; and Harry, you shall have five pound to buy some books," said my lord, who was generous with his own, and, indeed, with other folks' money. "I wish your aunt would die once a year, Rachel; we could spend your money, and all your sisters', too."

"I have but one aunt — and — and I have another use for the money, my Lord," says my lady, turning very red.

"Another use, my dear; and what do you know about money?" cries my lord. "And what the devil is there that I don't give you which you want?"

"I intend to give this money — can't you fancy how, my lord?"

My lord swore one of his large oaths that he did not know in the least what she meant.

"I intend it for Harry Esmond to go to College. — Cousin Harry," says my lady, "you mustn't stay longer in this dull place, but make a name to yourself, and for us too, Harry."

"D — n it, Harry 's well enough here," says my lord, for a moment looking rather sulky.

"Is Harry going away? You don't mean to say you will go away?" cry out Frank and Beatrix at one breath.

"But he will come back; and this will always be his home," cries my lady, with blue eyes looking a celestical kindness: "and his scholars will always love him; won't they?"

"By G — d, Rachel, you 're a good woman!" says my lord, seizing my lady's hand, at which she blushed very much, and shrank back putting her children before her. "I wish you joy, my kinsman," he continued, giving Harry Esmond a hearty slap on the

shoulder. "I won't baulk your luck. Go to Cambridge, boy; and when Tusher dies, you shall have the living here, if you are not better provided by that time. We'll furnish the dining-room and buy the horses another year. I'll give thee a nag out of the stable: take any one except my hack and the bay gelding and the coach-horses; and God speed thee, my boy!"

"Have the sorrel, Harry; 't is a good one. Father says 't is the best in the stable," says little Frank clapping his hands, and jumping up. "Let's come and see him in the stable." And the other, in his delight and eagerness, was for leaving the room that instant to arrange about his journey.

The Lady Castlewood looked after him with sad penetrating glances. "He wishes to be gone already, my Lord," said she to her husband.

The young man hung back abashed. "Indeed, I would stay for ever, if your ladyship bade me," he said.

"And thou wouldst be a fool for thy pains, kinsman," said my lord. "Tut, tut, man. Go and see the world. Sow thy wild oats; and take the best luck that Fate sends thee. I wish I were a boy again, that I might go to college, and taste the Trumpington ale."

"Ours, indeed, is but a dull home," cries my lady, with a little of sadness, and, may be, of satire, in her voice: "an old glum house, half ruined, and the rest only half furnished; a woman and two children are but poor company for men that are accustomed to better. We are only fit to be your worship's hand-maids, and your pleasures must of necessity lie elsewhere than at home."

"Curse me, Rachel, if I know now whether thou art in earnest or not," said my lord.

"In earnest, my Lord!" says she, still clinging by one of her children. "Is there much subject here for joke?" And she made him a grand curtsey, and, giving a stately look to Harry Esmond, which seemed to say, "Remember; you understand me, though he does not," she left the room with her children.

"Since she found out that confounded Hexton business," my lord said — "and be hanged to them that told her! — she has not been the same woman. She who used to be as humble as a milkmaid, is as proud as a princess," says my lord. "Take my counsel, Harry Esmond, and keep clear of women. Since I have had anything to do with the jades, they have given me nothing but disgust. I had a wife at Tangier, with whom, as she couldn't speak a word of my language, you'd have thought I might lead a quiet life. But she tried to poison me, because she was jealous of a Jew girl. There was your aunt, for aunt she is — aunt Jezebel, a pretty life your father led with *her*, and here's my lady. When I saw her on a pillion riding behind the Dean her father, she looked and was such a baby, that a sixpenny doll might have pleased her. And now you see what she is, — hands off, highty-tighty, high and mighty, an empress couldn't be grander. Pass us the tankard, Harry, my boy. A mug of beer and a toast at morn, says my host. A toast and a mug of beer at noon, says my dear. D — n it, Polly loves a mug of ale, too, and laced with brandy, by Jove!" Indeed, I suppose they drank it together; for my lord was often

thick in his speech at mid-day dinner; and at night at supper, speechless altogether.

Harry Esmond's departure resolved upon, it seemed as if the Lady Castlewood, too, rejoiced to lose him; for more than once, when the lad, ashamed perhaps at his own secret eagerness to go away (at any rate stricken with sadness at the idea of leaving those from whom he had received so many proofs of love and kindness inestimable), tried to express to his mistress his sense of gratitude to her, and his sorrow at quitting those who had so sheltered and tended a nameless and houseless orphan, Lady Castlewood cut short his protests of love and his lamentations, and would hear of no grief, but only look forward to Harry's fame and prospects in life. "Our little legacy will keep you for four years like a gentleman. Heaven's Providence, your own genius, industry, honour, must do the rest for you. Castlewood will always be a home for you, and these children, whom you have taught and loved, will not forget to love you. And Harry," said she (and this was the only time when she spoke with a tear in her eye, or a tremor in her voice), "it may happen in the course of nature that I shall be called away from them; and their father — and — and they will need true friends and protectors. Promise me that you will be true to them — as — as I think I have been to you — and a mother's fond prayer and blessing go with you."

"So help me God, Madam, I will," said Harry Esmond, falling on his knees, and kissing the hand of his dearest mistress. "If you will have me stay now, I will. What matters whether or no I make my way in life, or whether a poor bastard dies as unknown as

he is now? 'T is enough that I have your love and kindness surely; and to make you happy is duty enough for me."

"Happy!" says she; "but indeed I ought to be, with my children, and — "

"Not happy!" cried Esmond (for he knew what her life was, though he and his mistress never spoke a word concerning it). "If not happiness, it may be ease. Let me stay and work for you — let me stay and be your servant."

"Indeed, you are best away," said my lady, laughing, as she put her hand on the boy's head for a moment. "You shall stay in no such dull place. You shall go to college and distinguish yourself as becomes your name. That is how you shall please me best; and — and if my children want you, or I want you, you shall come to us; and I know we may count on you."

"May Heaven forsake me if you may not," Harry said, getting up from his knee.

"And my knight longs for a dragon this instant that he may fight," said my lady, laughing: which speech made Harry Esmond start, and turn red; for indeed the very thought was in his mind that he would like that some chance should immediately happen whereby he might show his devotion. And it pleased him to think that his lady had called him "her knight," and often and often he recalled this to his mind, and prayed that he might be her true knight too.

My lady's bed-chamber window looked out over the country, and you could see from it the purple hills beyond Castlewood village, the green common betwixt that and the Hall, and the old bridge which crossed

over the river. When Harry Esmond went away for Cambridge, little Frank ran alongside his horse as far as the bridge, and there Harry stopped for a moment, and looked back at the house where the best part of his life had been past. It lay before him with its grey familiar towers, a pinnacle or two shining in the sun, the buttresses and terrace walls casting great blue shades on the grass. And Harry remembered all his life after how he saw his mistress at the window looking out on him, in a white robe, the little Beatrix's chestnut curls resting at her mother's side. Both waved a farewell to him, and little Frank sobbed to leave him. Yes, he *would* be his lady's true knight, he vowed in his heart; he waved her an adieu with his hat. The village people had good good-bye to say to him too. All knew that Master Harry was going to college, and most of them had a kind word and a look of farewell. I do not stop to say what adventures he began to imagine or what career to devise for himself before he had ridden three miles from home. He had not read Monsieur Galland's ingenious Arabian tales as yet; but be sure that there are other folks who build castles in the air, and have fine hopes, and kick them down too, besides honest Alnaschar.

CHAPTER X.

I go to Cambridge, and do but little good there.

My Lord, who said he should like to revisit the old haunts of his youth, kindly accompanied Harry Esmond in his first journey to Cambridge. Their road lay through London, where my Lord Viscount would also have Harry stay a few days to show him the pleasures of the town, before he entered upon his university studies, and whilst here Harry's patron conducted the young man to my Lady Dowager's house at Chelsea near London: the kind lady at Castlewood having specially ordered that the young gentleman and the old should pay a respectful visit in that quarter.

Her ladyship the Viscountess Dowager occupied a handsome new house in Chelsea, with a garden behind it, and facing the river, always a bright and animated sight with its swarms of sailors, barges, and wherries. Harry laughed at recognising in the parlour the well-remembered old piece of Sir Peter Lely, wherein his father's widow was represented as a virgin huntress armed with a gilt bow and arrow, and encumbered only with that small quantity of drapery which it would seem the virgins in King Charles's day were accustomed to wear.

My Lady Dowager had left off this peculiar habit of huntress when she married. But though she was now considerably past sixty years of age, I believe

she thought that airy nymph of the picture could still be easily recognised in the venerable personage who gave an audience to Harry and his patron.

She received the young man with even more favour than she showed to the elder, for she chose to carry on the conversation in French, in which my Lord Castlewood was no great proficient, and expressed her satisfaction at finding that Mr. Esmond could speak fluently in that language. "'T was the only one fit for polite conversation," she condescended to say, "and suitable to persons of high breeding."

My lord laughed afterwards, as the gentlemen went away, at his kinswoman's behaviour. He said he remembered the time when she could speak English fast enough, and joked in his jolly way at the loss he had had of such a lovely wife as that.

My Lady Viscountess deigned to ask his lordship news of his wife and children; she had heard that Lady Castlewood had had the small-pox; she hoped she was not so *very* much disfigured as people said.

At this remark about his wife's malady, my Lord Viscount winced and turned red, but the Dowager in speaking of the disfigurement of the young lady, turned to her looking-glass and examined her old wrinkled countenance in it with such a grin of satisfaction, that it was all her guests could do to refrain from laughing in her ancient face.

She asked Harry what his profession was to be; and my lord, saying that the lad was to take orders, and have the living of Castlewood when old Dr. Tusher vacated it; she did not seem to show any particular anger at the notion of Harry's becoming a Church of

England clergyman, nay, was rather glad than otherwise, that the youth should be so provided for. She bade Mr. Esmond not to forget to pay her a visit, whenever he passed through London, and carried her graciousness so far as to send a purse with twenty guineas for him, to the tavern at which my lord put up (the "Greyhound," in Charing Cross); and along with this welcome gift for her kinsman, she sent a little doll for a present to my lord's little daughter Beatrix, who was growing beyond the age of dolls by this time, and was as tall almost as her venerable relative.

After seeing the town, and going to the plays, my Lord Castlewood and Esmond rode together to Cambridge, spending two pleasant days upon the journey. Those rapid new coaches were not established as yet, that performed the whole journey between London and the University in a single day; however, the road was pleasant and short enough to Harry Esmond, and he always gratefully remembered that happy holiday, which his kind patron gave him.

Mr. Esmond was entered a pensioner of Trinity College in Cambridge, to which famous college my lord had also in his youth belonged. Dr. Montague was master at this time, and received my Lord Viscount with great politeness; so did Mr. Bridge, who was appointed to be Harry's tutor. Tom Tusher, who was of Emmanuel College, and was by this time a junior soph, came to wait upon my lord, and to take Harry under his protection; and comfortable rooms being provided for him in the great court close by the gate, and near to the famous Mr. Newton's lodgings, Harry's patron took leave of him with many kind

words and blessings, and an admonition to him to behave better at the University than my lord himself had ever done.

'T is needless in these memoirs to go at any length into the particulars of Harry Esmond's college career. It was like that of a hundred young gentlemen of that day. But he had the ill-fortune to be older by a couple of years than most of his fellow-students, and by his previous solitary mode of bringing up, the circumstances of his life, and the peculiar thoughtfulness and melancholy that had naturally engendered, he was, in a great measure, cut off from the society of comrades who were much younger and higher spirited than he. His tutor, who had bowed down to the ground, as he walked my lord over the college grass-plats, changed his behaviour as soon as the nobleman's back was turned, and was — at least, Harry thought so — harsh and overbearing. When the lads used to assemble in their *greges* in hall, Harry found himself alone in the midst of that little flock of boys; they raised a great laugh at him when he was set on to read Latin, which he did with the foreign pronunciation taught to him by his old master, the Jesuit, than which he knew no other. Mr. Bridge, the tutor, made him the object of clumsy jokes, in which he was fond of indulging. The young man's spirit was chafed, and his vanity mortified; and he found himself, for some time, as lonely in this place as ever he had been at Castlewood, whither he longed to return. His birth was a source of shame to him, and he fancied a hundred slights and sneers from young and old, who, no doubt, had treated him better, had he met them himself more frankly. And as he looks back, in calmer

days, upon this period of his life, which he thought so unhappy, he can see that his own pride and vanity caused no small part of the mortifications which he attributed to others' ill-will. The world deals good-naturedly with good-natured people, and I never knew a sulky misanthropist who quarrelled with it, but it was he, and not it, that was in the wrong. Tom Tusher gave Harry plenty of good advice on this subject, for Tom had both good sense and good humour: but Mr. Harry chose to treat his senior with a great deal of superfluous disdain and absurd scorn, and would by no means part from his darling injuries, in which, very likely, no man believed but himself. As for honest Doctor Bridge, the tutor found, after a few trials of wit with the pupil, that the younger man was an ugly subject for wit, and that the laugh was often turned against him. This did not make tutor and pupil any better friends; but had, so far, an advantage for Esmond, that Mr. Bridge was induced to leave him alone; and so long as he kept his chapels, and did the college exercises required of him, Bridge was content not to see Harry's glum face in his class, and to leave him to read and sulk for himself in his own chamber.

A poem or two in Latin and English, which were pronounced to have some merit, and a Latin oration (for Mr. Esmond could write that language better than pronounce it), got him a little reputation both with the authorities of the University and amongst the young men with whom he began to pass for more than he was worth. A few victories over their common enemy Mr. Bridge, made them incline towards him, and look upon him as the champion of their order

against the seniors. Such of the lads as he took into his confidence found him not so gloomy and haughty as his appearance led them to believe; and Don Dismallo, as he was called, became presently a person of some little importance in his college, and was, as he believes, set down by the seniors there as rather a dangerous character.

Don Dismallo was a staunch young Jacobite, like the rest of his family; gave himself many absurd airs of loyalty; used to invite young friends to Burgundy, and give the King's health on King James's birthday; wore black on the day of his abdication; fasted on the anniversary of King William's coronation; and performed a thousand absurd antics, of which he smiles now to think.

These follies caused many remonstrances on Tom Tusher's part, who was always a friend of the powers that be, as Esmond was always in opposition to them. Tom was a Whig, while Esmond was a Tory. Tom never missed a lecture, and capped the proctor with the profoundest of bows. No wonder he sighed over Harry's insubordinate courses, and was angry when the others laughed at him. But that Harry was known to have my Lord Viscount's protection, Tom no doubt would have broken with him altogether. But honest Tom never gave up a comrade as long as he was the friend of a great man. This was not out of scheming on Tom's part, but a natural inclination towards the great. 'T was no hypocrisy in him to flatter, but the bent of his mind, which was always perfectly good-humoured, obliging, and servile.

Harry had very liberal allowances, for his dear mistress of Castlewood not only regularly supplied

him, but the Dowager at Chelsea made her donation annual, and received Esmond at her house near London every Christmas; but in spite of these benefactions, Esmond was constantly poor; whilst 't was a wonder with how small a stipend from his father Tom Tusher contrived to make a good figure. 'T is true that Harry both spent, gave, and lent his money very freely, which Thomas never did. I think he was like the famous Duke of Marlborough in this instance, who getting a present of fifty pieces, when a young man, from some foolish woman, who fell in love with his good looks, showed the money to Cadogan in a drawer scores of years after, where it had lain ever since he had sold his beardless honour to procure it. I do not mean to say that Tom ever let out his good looks so profitably, for nature had not endowed him with any particular charms of person, and he ever was a pattern of moral behaviour, losing no opportunity of giving the very best advice to his younger comrade; with which article, to do him justice, he parted very freely. Not but that he was a merry fellow, too, in his way; he loved a joke, if by good fortune he understood it, and took his share generously of a bottle if another paid for it, and especially if there was a young lord in company to drink it. In these cases there was not a harder drinker in the University than Mr. Tusher could be; and it was edifying to behold him, fresh shaved, and with smug face, singing out "Amen!" at early chapel in the morning. In his reading, poor Harry permitted himself to go a gadding after all the Nine Muses, and so very likely had but little favour from any one of them; whereas Tom Tusher, who had no more turn for poetry than a ploughboy, never-

theless, by a dogged perseverance and obsequiousness in courting the divine Calliope, got himself a prize, and some credit in the University, and a fellowship at his college, as a reward for his scholarship. In this time of Mr. Esmond's life, he got the little reading which he ever could boast of, and passed a good part of his days greedily devouring all the books on which he could lay hand. In this desultory way the works of most of the English, French, and Italian poets came under his eyes, and he had a smattering of the Spanish tongue likewise, besides the ancient languages, of which, at least of Latin, he was a tolerable master.

Then, about midway in his University career, he fell to reading for the profession to which worldly prudence rather than inclination called him, and was presently bewildered in theological controversy. In the course of his reading (which was neither pursued with that seriousness or that devout mind which such a study requires,) the youth found himself, at the end of one month, a Papist, and was about to proclaim his faith; the next month, a Protestant, with Chillingworth; and the third, a sceptic, with Hobbs and Bayle. Whereas honest Tom Tusher never permitted his mind to stray out of the prescribed University path, accepted the Thirty-nine Articles with all his heart, and would have signed and sworn to other nine-and-thirty with entire obedience. Harry's wilfulness in this matter, and disorderly thoughts and conversation, so shocked and afflicted his senior, that there grew up a coldness and estrangement between them, so that they became scarce more than mere acquaintances from having been intimate friends when

they came to College first. Politics ran high, too, at the University; and here, also, the young men were at variance. Tom professed himself, albeit a high churchman, a strong King William's-man; whereas Harry brought his family Tory politics to College with him, to which he must add a dangerous admiration for Oliver Cromwell, whose side, or King James's by turns, he often chose to take in the disputes which the young gentlemen used to hold in each other's rooms, where they debated on the state of the nation, crowned and deposed kings, and toasted past and present heroes or beauties in flagons of College ale.

Thus either from the circumstances of his birth, or the natural melancholy of his disposition, Esmond came to live very much by himself during his stay at the University, having neither ambition enough to distinguish himself in the College career, nor caring to mingle with the mere pleasures and boyish frolicks of the students, who were, for the most part, two or three years younger than he. He fancied that the gentlemen of the common room of his college slighted him on account of his birth, and hence kept aloof from their society. It may be that he made the ill-will, which he imagined came from them, by his own behaviour, which, as he looks back on it in after-life, he now sees was morose and haughty. At any rate, he was as tenderly grateful for kindness, as he was suspectible of slight and wrong; and, lonely as he was generally, yet had one or two very warm friendships for his companions of those days.

One of these was a queer gentleman that resided in the University, though he was no member of it,

and was the professor of a science, scarce recognised in the common course of College education. This was a French refugee-officer, who had been driven out of his native country at the time of the Protestant persecutions there, and who came to Cambridge, where he taught the science of the small-sword, and set up a saloon-of-arms. Though he declared himself a Protestant, 't was said Mr. Moreau was a Jesuit in disguise; indeed, he brought very strong recommendations to the Tory party, which was pretty strong in that University, and very likely was one of the many agents whom King James had in this country. Esmond found this gentleman's conversation very much more agreeable, and to his taste, than the talk of the College divines in the common room; he never wearied of Moreau's stories of the wars of Turenne and Condé, in which he had borne a part; and being familiar with the French tongue from his youth, and in a place where but few spoke it, his company became very agreeable to the brave old professor of arms, whose favourite pupil he was, and who made Mr. Esmond a very tolerable proficient in the noble science of *escrime*.

At the next term Esmond was to take his degree of Bachelor of Arts, and afterwards, in proper season, to assume the cassock and bands which his fond mistress would have him wear. Tom Tusher himself was a parson and a fellow of his college by this time; and Harry felt that he would very gladly cede his right to the living of Castlewood to Tom, and that his own calling was in no way the pulpit. But as he was bound, before all things in the world, to his dear mistress at home, and knew that a refusal on

his part would grieve her, he determined to give her no hint of his unwillingness to the clerical office; and it was in this unsatisfactory mood of mind that he went to spend the last vacation he should have at Castlewood before he took orders.

CHAPTER XI.

I come home for a holiday to Castlewood, and find a skeleton in the house.

At his third long vacation, Esmond came as usual to Castlewood, always feeling an eager thrill of pleasure when he found himself once more in the house where he had passed so many years, and beheld the kind familiar eyes of his mistress looking upon him. She and her children (out of whose company she scarce ever saw him) came to greet him. Miss Beatrix was grown so tall that Harry did not quite know whether he might kiss her or no; and she blushed and held back when he offered that salutation, though she took it, and even courted it, when they were alone. The young lord was shooting up to be like his gallant father in look though with his mother's kind eyes: the Lady of Castlewood herself seemed grown, too, since Harry saw her — in her look more stately, in her person fuller, in her face, still as ever most tender and friendly, a greater air of command and decision than had appeared in that guileless sweet countenance which Harry remembered so gratefully. The tone of her voice was so much deeper and sadder when she spoke and welcomed him, that it quite startled Esmond, who looked up at her surprised as she spoke, when she withdrew her eyes from him; nor did she ever look at him afterwards when his own eyes were gazing upon her. A some-

thing hinting at grief and secret, and filling his mind with alarm undefinable, seemed to speak with that low thrilling voice of hers, and look out of those clear sad eyes. Her greeting to Esmond was so cold that it almost pained the lad (who would have liked to fall on his knees, and kiss the skirt of her robe, so fond and ardent was his respect and regard for her), and he faltered in answering the questions which she, hesitating on her side, began to put to him. Was he happy at Cambridge? Did he study too hard? She hoped not. He had grown very tall, and looked very well.

"He has got a moustache!" cries out Master Esmond.

"Why does he not wear a perruke like my Lord Mohun?" asked Miss Beatrix. "My lord says that nobody wears their own hair."

"I believe you will have to occupy your old chamber," says my lady. "I hope the house-keeper has got it ready."

"Why, Mamma, you have been there ten times these three days yourself," exclaims Frank.

"And she cut some flowers which you planted in my garden — do you remember, ever so many years ago? — when I was quite a little girl," cries out Miss Beatrix, on tiptoe. "And mamma put them in your window."

"I remember when you grew well after you were ill that you used to like roses," said the lady, blushing like one of them. They all conducted Harry Esmond to his chamber; the children running before, Harry walking by his mistress hand-in-hand.

The old room had been ornamented and beautified

not a little to receive him. The flowers were in the window in a china vase; and there was a fine new counterpane on the bed, which chatter-box Beatrix said mamma had made too. A fire was crackling on the hearth, although it was June. My lady thought the room wanted warming; everything was done to make him happy and welcome: "And you are not to be a page any longer, but a gentleman and kinsman, and to walk with papa and mamma," said the children. And as soon as his dear mistress and children had left him to himself, it was with a heart overflowing with love and gratefulness that he flung himself down on his knees by the side of the little bed, and asked a blessing upon those who were so kind to him.

The children, who are always house tell-tales, soon made him acquainted with the little history of the house and family. Papa had been to London twice. Papa often went away now. Papa had taken Beatrix to Westlands, where she was taller than Sir George Harper's second daughter, though she was two years older. Papa had taken Beatrix and Frank both to Bellminster, where Frank had got the better of Lord Bellminster's son in a boxing match — my lord, laughing, told Harry, afterwards. Many gentlemen came to stop with papa, and papa had gotten a new game from London, a French game, called a billiard, — that the French king played it very well: and the Dowager Lady Castlewood had sent Miss Beatrix a present; and papa had gotten a new chaise, with two little horses, which he drove himself, beside the coach, which mamma went in; and Dr. Tusher was a cross old plague, and they did not like to learn from him at all; and papa did not care about them learning, and laughed when

they were at their books; but mamma liked them to learn, and taught them: and I don't think papa is fond of mamma, said Miss Beatrix, with her great eyes. She had come quite close up to Harry Esmond by the time this prattle took place, and was on his knee, and had examined all the points of his dress, and all the good or bad features of his homely face.

"You shouldn't say that papa is not fond of mamma," said the boy, at this confession. "Mamma never said so; and mamma forbade you to say it, Miss Beatrix."

'T was this, no doubt, that accounted for the sadness in Lady Castlewood's eyes, and the plaintive vibrations of her voice. Who does not know of eyes, lighted by love once, where the flame shines no more? — of lamps extinguished, once properly trimmed and tended? Every man has such in his house. Such mementos make our splendidest chambers look blank and sad; such faces seen in a day cast a gloom upon our sunshine. So oaths mutually sworn, and invocations of Heaven, and priestly ceremonies, and fond belief, and love, so fond and faithful, that it never doubted but that it should live for ever, are all of no avail towards making love eternal: it dies, in spite of the banns and the priest; and I have often thought there should be a visitation of the sick for it; and a funeral service, and an extreme unction, and an *abi in pace*. It has its course, like all mortal things — its beginning, progress, and decay. It buds, and it blooms out into sunshine, and it withers and ends. Strephon and Chloe languish apart: join in a rapture: and presently you hear that Chloe is crying, and Strephon has broken his crook across her back. Can you mend it so as to show no marks of rupture? Not all the priests of

Hymen, not all the incantations to the gods can make it whole!

Waking up from dreams, books, and visions of College honours, in which, for two years, Harry Esmond had been immersed, he found himself instantly, on his return home, in the midst of this actual tragedy of life, which absorbed and interested him, more than all his tutor taught him. The persons whom he loved best in the world, and to whom he owed most, were living unhappily together. The gentlest and kindest of women was suffering ill-usage and shedding tears in secret: the man who made her wretched by neglect, if not by violence, was Harry's benefactor and patron. In houses where, in place of that sacred, inmost flame of love, there is discord at the centre, the whole household becomes hypocritical, and each lies to his neighbour. The husband (or it may be the wife) lies when the visitor comes in, and wears a grin of reconciliation or politeness before him. The wife lies (indeed, her business is to do that, and to smile, however much she is beaten), swallows her tears, and lies to her lord and master; lies in bidding little Jacky respect dear papa; lies in assuring grandpapa that she is perfectly happy. The servants lie, wearing grave faces behind their masters' chair, and pretending to be unconscious of the fighting; and so, from morning till bed-time, life is passed in falsehood. And wiseacres call this a proper regard of morals, and point out Baucis and Philemon as examples of a good life.

If my lady did not speak of her griefs to Harry Esmond, my lord was by no means reserved when in his cups, and spoke his mind very freely, bidding Harry, in his coarse way, and with his blunt language,

beware of all women, ascheats, jades, jilts, and using other unmistakeable monosyllables in speaking of them. Indeed, 't was the fashion of the day as I must own; and there's not a writer of my time of any note, with the exception of poor Dick Steele, that does not speak of a woman as of a slave, and scorn and use her as such. Mr. Pope, Mr. Congreve, Mr. Addison, Mr. Gay, every one of 'em, sing in this key; each according to his nature and politeness; and louder and fouler than all in abuse is Dr. Swift, who spoke of them as he treated them, worst of all.

Much of the quarrels and hatred which arise between married people come in my mind from the husband's rage and revolt at discovering that his slave and bedfellow, who is to minister to all his wishes, and is church-sworn to honour and obey him — is his superior; and that *he*, and not she, ought to be the subordinate of the twain; and in these controversies, I think, lay the cause of my lord's anger against his lady. When he left her, she began to think for herself, and her thoughts were not in his favour. After the illumination, when the love-lamp is put out that anon we spoke of, and by the common daylight you look at the picture, what a daub it looks! what a clumsy effigy! How many men and wives come to this knowledge, think you? And if it be painful to a woman to find herself mated for life to a boor, and ordered to love and honour a dullard: it is worse still for the man himself perhaps whenever in his dim comprehension the idea dawns that his slave and drudge yonder is, in truth, his superior; that the woman who does his bidding, and submits to his humour, should be his lord; that she can think a thousand things

beyond the power of his muddled brains; and that in yonder head, on the pillow opposite to him, lie a thousand feelings, mysteries of thought, latent scorns and rebellions, whereof he only dimly perceives the existence as they look out furtively from her eyes: treasures of love doomed to perish without a hand to gather them; sweet fancies and images of beauty that would grow and unfold themselves into flower; bright wit that would shine like diamonds could it be brought into the sun: and the tyrant in possession crushes the outbreak of all these, drives them back like slaves into the dungeon and darkness, and chafes without that his prisoner is rebellious, and his sworn subject undutiful and refractory. So the lamp was out in Castlewood Hall, and the lord and lady there saw each other as they were. With her illness and altered beauty my lord's fire for his wife disappeared; with his selfishness and faithlessness her foolish fiction of love and reverence was rent away. Love? — who is to love what is base and unlovely? Respect? — who is to respect what is gross and sensual? Not all the marriage oaths sworn before all the parsons, cardinals, ministers, muftis and rabbins in the world, can bind to that monstrous allegiance. This couple was living apart then: the woman happy to be allowed to love and tend her children (who were never of her own good-will away from her), and thankful to have saved such treasures as these out of the wreck in which the better part of her heart went down.

These young ones had had no instructors save their mother, and Doctor Tusher for their theology, occasionally, and had made more progress than might have been expected under a tutor so indulgent and

fond as Lady Castlewood. Beatrix could sing and dance like a nymph. Her voice was her father's delight after dinner. She ruled over the house with little imperial ways which her parents coaxed and laughed at. She had long learned the value of her bright eyes, and tried experiments in coquetry, *in corpore vili*, upon rustics and country squires, until she should prepare to conquer the world and the fashion. She put on a new ribbon to welcome Harry Esmond, made eyes at him, and directed her young smiles at him, not a little to the amusement of the young man, and the joy of her father, who laughed his great laugh, and encouraged her in her thousand antics. Lady Castlewood watched the child gravely and sadly: the little one was pert in her replies to her mother: yet eager in her protestations of love and promises of amendment: and as ready to cry (after a little quarrel brought on by her own giddiness) until she had won back her mamma's favour, as she was to risk the kind lady's displeasure by fresh outbreaks of restless vanity. From her mother's sad looks she fled to her father's chair and boozy laughter. She already set the one against the other: and the little rogue delighted in the mischief which she knew how to make so early.

The young heir of Castlewood was spoiled by father and mother both. He took their caresses as men do, and as if they were his right. He had his hawks and his spaniel dog, his little horse, and his beagles. He had learned to ride and to drink, and to shoot flying: and he had a small court, the sons of the huntsman and woodman, as became the heir-apparent, taking after the example of my lord his father. If he had a headache, his mother was as much

frightened as if the plague were in the house. My lord laughed and jeered in his abrupt way — (indeed 't was on the day after New Year's Day, and an excess of mince pie) — and said with some of his usual oaths — "D — n it, Harry Esmond — you see how my lady takes on about Frank's megrim. She used to be sorry about me, my boy, (pass the tankard, Harry,) and to be frighted if I had a headache once. She don't care about my head now. They 're like that — women are — all the same, Harry, all jilts in their hearts. Stick to College — stick to punch and Buttery ale: and never see a woman that 's handsomer than an old cinder-faced bed-maker. That 's my counsel."

It was my lord's custom to fling out many jokes of this nature, in presence of his wife and children, at meals — clumsy sarcasms which my lady turned many a time, or which, sometimes, she affected not to hear, or which now and again would hit their mark and make the poor victim wince (as you could see by her flushing face and eyes filling with tears), or which again worked her up to anger and retort when, in answer to one of these heavy bolts, she whould flash back with a quivering reply. The pair were not happy; nor indeed was it happy to be with them. Alas, that youthful love and truth should end in bitterness and bankruptcy! To see a young couple loving each other is no wonder; but to see an old couple loving each other is the best sight of all. Harry Esmond became the confidant of one and the other — that is, my lord told the lad all his griefs and wrongs (which were indeed of Lord Castlewood's own making), and Harry divined my lady's; his affection leading him easily to

penetrate the hypocrisy under which Lady Castlewood generally chose to go disguised, and to see her heart aching whilst her face wore a smile. 'T is a hard task for women in life, that mask which the world bids them wear. But there is no greater crime than for a woman, who is ill-used and unhappy, to show that she is so. The world is quite relentless about bidding her to keep a cheerful face; and our women, like the Malabar wives, are forced to go smiling and painted to sacrifice themselves with their husbands; their relations being the most eager to push them on to their duty, and, under their shouts and applauses, to smother and hush their cries of pain.

So, into the sad secret of his patron's household Harry Esmond became initiated, he scarce knew how. It had passed under his eyes two years before, when he could not understand it; but reading, and thought, and experience of men, had oldened him; and one of the deepest sorrows of a life which had never, in truth, been very happy, came upon him now, when he was compelled to understand and pity a grief which he stood quite powerless to relieve.

It hath been said my lord would never take the oath of allegiance, nor his seat as a peer of the kingdom of Ireland, where, indeed, he had but a nominal estate; and refused an English peerage which King William's government offered him as a bribe to secure his loyalty.

He might have accepted this, and would doubtless, but for the earnest remonstrances of his wife (who ruled her husband's opinions better than she could govern his conduct), and who being a simple-hearted

woman with but one rule of faith and right, never thought of swerving from her fidelity to the exiled family, or of recognising any other sovereign but King James; and though she acquiesced in the doctrine of obedience to the reigning power, no temptation, she thought, could induce her to acknowledge the Prince of Orange as rightful monarch, nor to let her lord so acknowledge him. So my Lord Castlewood remained a nonjuror all his life nearly, though his self-denial caused him many a pang, and left him sulky and out of humour.

The year after the Revolution, and all through King William's life, 't is known there were constant intrigues for the restoration of the exiled family; but if my Lord Castlewood took any share of these, as is probable, 't was only for a short time, and when Harry Esmond was too young to be introduced into such important secrets.

But in the year 1695, when that conspiracy of Sir John Fenwick, Colonel Lowick, and others, was set on foot, for waylaying King William as he came from Hampton Court to London, and a secret plot was formed, in which a vast number of the nobility and people of honour were engaged; Father Holt appeared at Castlewood, and brought a young friend with him, a gentleman whom 't was easy to see that both my lord and the Father treated with uncommon deference. Harry Esmond saw this gentleman, and knew and recognised him in after life, as shall be shown in its place; and he has little doubt now that my Lord Viscount was implicated somewhat in the transactions which always kept Father Holt employed and travelling hither and thither under a dozen of different

names and disguises. The Father's companion went by the name of Captain James; and it was under a very different name and appearance that Harry Esmond afterwards saw him.

It was the next year that the Fenwick conspiracy blew up, which is a matter of public history now, and which ended in the execution of Sir John and many more, who suffered manfully for their treason, and who were attended to Tyburn by my lady's father Dean Armstrong, Mr. Collier, and other stout non-juring clergymen, who absolved them at the gallows-foot.

'T is known that when Sir John was apprehended, discovery was made of a great number of names of gentlemen engaged in the conspiracy; when, with a noble wisdom and clemency, the Prince burned the list of conspirators furnished to him, and said he would know no more. Now it was, after this, that Lord Castlewood swore his great oath, that he would never, so help him Heaven, be engaged in any transaction against that brave and merciful man; and so he told Holt when the indefatigable priest visited him, and would have had him engage in a farther conspiracy. After this my lord ever spoke of King William as he was — as of one of the wisest, the bravest, and the greatest of men. My Lady Esmond (for her part) said she could never pardon the King, first, for ousting his father-in-law from his throne, and secondly, for not being constant to his wife, the Princess Mary. Indeed, I think if Nero were to rise again, and be king of England, and a good family man, the ladies would pardon him. My lord laughed at his wife's objections — the standard of virtue did not fit him much.

The last conference which Mr. Holt had with his lordship took place when Harry was come home for his first vacation from college, (Harry saw his old tutor but for a half hour, and exchanged no private words with him), and their talk, whatever it might be, left my Lord Viscount very much disturbed in mind — so much so, that his wife, and his young kinsman, Henry Esmond, could not but observe his disquiet. After Holt was gone, my lord rebuffed Esmond, and again treated him with the greatest deference; he shunned his wife's questions and company, and looked at his children with such a face of gloom and anxiety, muttering "Poor children — poor children!" in a way that could not but fill those whose life it was to watch him and obey him with great alarm. For which gloom, each person interested in the Lord Castlewood, framed in his or her own mind an interpretation.

My lady, with a laugh of cruel bitterness, said, "I suppose the person at Hexton has been ill, or has scolded him" (for my lord's infatuation about Mrs. Marwood was known only too well). Young Esmond feared for his money affairs, into the condition of which he had been initiated; and that the expenses, always greater than his revenue, had caused Lord Castlewood disquiet.

One of the causes why my Lord Viscount had taken young Esmond into his special favour, was a trivial one, that hath not before been mentioned, though it was a very lucky accident in Henry Esmond's life. A very few months after my lord's coming to Castlewood, in the winter time, — the little boy, being a child in a petticoat, trotting about — it happened that little Frank was with his father after dinner, who fell

asleep over his wine, heedless of the child, who crawled to the fire; and as good fortune would have it, Esmond was sent by his mistress for the boy just as the poor little screaming urchin's coat was set on fire by a log; when Esmond, rushing forward, tore the dress off the infant, so that his own hands were burned more than the child's, who was frightened rather than hurt, by this accident. But certainly 't was providential that a resolute person should have come in at that instant, or the child had been burned to death probably, my lord sleeping very heavily after drinking, and not waking so cool as a man should who had a danger to face.

Ever after this the father, loud in his expressions of remorse and humility for being a tipsy good-for-nothing, and of admiration for Harry Esmond, whom his lordship would style a hero for doing a very trifling service, had the tenderest regard for his son's preserver, and Harry became quite as one of the family. His burns were tended with the greatest care by his kind mistress, who said that Heaven had sent him to be the guardian of her children, and that she would love him all her life.

And it was after this, and from the very great love and tenderness which had grown up in this little household, rather than to the exhortations of Dean Armstrong (though these had no small weight with him), that Harry came to be quite of the religion of his house and his dear mistress, of which he has ever since been a professing member. As for Dr. Tusher's boasts that he was the cause of this conversion — even in these young days Mr. Esmond had such a contempt for the Doctor, that had Tusher bade him believe

anything (which he did not — never meddling at all), Harry would that instant have questioned the truth on't.

My lady seldom drank wine; but on certain days of the year, such as birthdays (poor Harry had never a one) and anniversarys, she took a little; and this day, the 29th December, was one. At the end, then, of this year, '96, it might have been a fortnight after Mr. Holt's last visit, Lord Castlewood being still very gloomy in mind, and sitting at table, — my lady bidding a servant bring her a glass of wine, and looking at her husband with one of her sweet smiles, said:

"My lord will you not fill a bumper too, and let me call a toast?"

"What is it, Rachel?" says he, holding out his empty glass to be filled.

"'T is the 29th of December," says my lady, with her fond look of gratitude; and "my toast is, 'Harry — and God bless him, who saved my boy's life!'"

My lord looked at Harry hard, and drank the glass, but clapped it down on the table in a moment, and, with a sort of groan, rose up, and went out of the room. What was the matter? We all knew that some great grief was over him.

Whether my lord's prudence had made him richer, or legacies had fallen to him, which enabled him to support a greater establishment than that frugal one which had been too much for his small means, Harry Esmond knew not, but the house of Castlewood was now on a scale much more costly than it had been during the first years of his lordship's coming to the title. There were more horses in the stable and more

servants in the hall, and many more guests coming and going now than formerly, when it was found difficult enough by the strictest economy to keep the house as befitted one of his lordship's rank, and the estate out of debt. And it did not require very much penetration to find that many of the new acquaintances at Castlewood were not agreeable to the lady there: not that she ever treated them or any mortal with anything but courtesy; but they were persons who could not be welcome to her; and whose society a lady so refined and reserved could scarce desire for her children. There came fuddling squires from the country round, who bawled their songs under her windows and drank themselves tipsy with my lord's punch and ale: there came officers from Hexton, in whose company our little lord was made to hear talk and to drink, and swear too in a way that made the delicate lady tremble for her son. Esmond tried to console her by saying what he knew of his College experience; that with this sort of company and conversation a man must fall in sooner or later in his course through the world: and it mattered very little whether he heard it at twelve years old or twenty — the youths who quitted mother's apron-strings the latest being not uncommonly the wildest rakes. But it was about her daughter that Lady Castlewood was the most anxious, and the danger which she thought menaced the little Beatrix from the indulgencies which her father gave her, (it must be owned that my lord, since these unhappy domestic differences especially, was at once violent in his language to the children when angry, as he was too familiar, not to say coarse, when he was in a good humour,) and from the

company into which the careless lord brought the child.

Not very far off from Castlewood is Sark Castle, where the Marchioness of Sark lived, who was known to have been a mistress of the late King Charles — and to this house, whither indeed a great part of the county gentry went, my lord insisted upon going, not only himself, but on taking his little daughter and son, to play with the children there. The children were nothing loth, for the house was splendid and the welcome kind enough. But my lady, justly no doubt, thought that the children of such a mother as that noted Lady Sark had been, could be no good company for her two; and spoke her mind to her lord. His own language when he was thwarted was not indeed of the gentlest: to be brief, there was a family dispute on this, as there had been on many other points — and the lady was not only forced to give in, for the other's will was law — nor could she, on account of their tender age, tell her children what was the nature of her objection to their visit of pleasure, or indeed mention to them any objection at all — but she had the additional secret mortification to find them returning delighted with their new friends, loaded with presents from them, and eager to be allowed to go back to a place of such delights as Sark Castle. Every year she thought the company there would be more dangerous to her daughter, as from a child Beatrix grew to a woman, and her daily-increasing beauty, and many faults of character too, expanded.

It was Harry Esmond's lot to see one of the visits which the old Lady of Sark paid to the Lady of Castlewood Hall: whither she came in state with six chesnut

horses and blue ribbons, a page on each carriage step, a gentleman of the horse, and armed servants riding before and behind her. And but that it was unpleasant to see Lady Castlewood's face, it was amusing to watch the behaviour of the two enemies: the frigid patience of the younger lady, and the unconquerable good humour of the elder — who would see no offence whatever her rival intended, and who never ceased to smile and to laugh, and to coax the children, and to pay compliments to every man, woman, child, nay dog, or chair and table, in Castlewood, so bent was she upon admiring everything there. She lauded the children, and wished — as indeed she well might — that her own family had been brought up as well as those cherubs. She had never seen such a complexion as dear Beatrix's — though to be sure she had a right to it from father and mother — Lady Castlewood's was indeed a wonder of freshness, and Lady Sark sighed to think she had not been born a fair woman; and remarking Harry Esmond, with a fascinating superannuated smile, she complimented him on his wit, which she said she could see from his eyes and forehead: and vowed that she never would have *him* at Sark until her daughter were out of the way.

CHAPTER XII.

My Lord Mohun comes among us for no good.

THERE had ridden along with this old Princess's cavalcade, two gentlemen; her son, my Lord Firebrace, and his friend, my Lord Mohun, who both were greeted with a great deal of cordiality by the hospitable Lord of Castlewood. My Lord Firebrace was but a feeble-minded and weak-limbed young nobleman, small in stature and limited in understanding — to judge from the talk young Esmond had with him; but the other was a person of a handsome presence, with the *bel air*, and a bright daring warlike aspect, which according to the chronicle of those days, had already achieved for him the conquest of several beauties and toasts. He had fought and conquered in France, as well as in Flanders; he had served a couple of campaigns with the Prince of Baden on the Danube, and witnessed the rescue of Vienna from the Turk. And he spoke of his military exploits pleasantly, and with the manly freedom of a soldier, so as to delight all his hearers at Castlewood, who were little accustomed to meet a companion so agreeable.

On the first day this noble company came, my lord would not hear of their departure before dinner, and carried away the gentlemen to amuse them, whilst his wife was left to do the honours of her house to the old Marchioness and her daughter within. They looked at the stables, where my Lord Mohun praised the horses,

though there was but a poor show there: they walked over the old house and gardens, and fought the siege of Oliver's time over again: they played a game of rackets in the old court, where the Lord Castlewood beat my Lord Mohun, who said he loved ball of all things, and would quickly come back to Castlewood for his revenge. After dinner they played bowls, and drank punch in the green alley; and when they parted they were sworn friends, my Lord Castlewood kissing the other lord before he mounted on horseback, and pronouncing him the best companion he had met for many a long day. All night long, over his tobacco-pipe, Castlewood did not cease to talk to Harry Esmond in praise of his new friend, and in fact did not leave off speaking of him until his lordship was so tipsy that he could not speak plainly any more.

At breakfast next day it was the same talk renewed; and when my lady said there was something free in the Lord Mohun's looks and manner of speech which caused her to mistrust him, her lord burst out with one of his laughs and oaths; said that he never liked man, woman, or beast, but what she was sure to be jealous of it; that Mohun was the prettiest fellow in England; that he hoped to see more of him whilst in the country; and that he would let Mohun know what my Lady Prude said of him.

"Indeed," Lady Castlewood said, "I liked his conversation well enough. 'Tis more amusing than that of most people I know. I thought it, I own, too free; not from what he said, as rather from what he implied."

"Psha! your ladyship does not know the world," said her husband; "and you have always been as squeamish as when you were a miss of fifteen."

"You found no fault when I was a miss at fifteen."

"Begad, Madam, you are grown too old for a pinafore now; and I hold that 't is for me to judge what company my wife shall see," said my lord, slapping the table.

"Indeed, Francis, I never thought otherwise," answered my lady, rising and dropping him a curtsey, in which stately action, if there was obedience, there was defiance too; and in which a bystander deeply interested in the happiness of that pair as Harry Esmond was, might see how hopelessly separated they were; what a great gulf of difference and discord had run between them!

"By G—d! Mohun is the best fellow in England; and I 'll invite him here, just to plague that woman. Did you ever see such a frigid insolence as it is, Harry? That 's the way she treats me," he broke out, storming, and his face growing red as he clenched his fists and went on. "I 'm nobody in my own house. I 'm to be the humble servant of that parson's daughter. By Jove! I 'd rather she should fling the dish at my head than sneer at me as she does. She puts me to shame before the children with her d—d airs; and, I 'll swear, tells Frank and Beaty that papa 's a reprobate, and that they ought to despise me."

"Indeed and indeed, Sir, I never heard her say a word but of respect regarding you," Harry Esmond interposed.

"No, curse it! I wish she would speak. But she never does. She scorns me, and holds her tongue. She keeps off from me as if I was a pestilence. By George! she was fond enough of her pestilence once. And when I came a-courting, you would see miss blush

— blush red, by George! for joy. Why what do you think she said to me, Harry? She said herself, when I joked with her about her d—d smiling red cheeks: "'T is as they do at Saint James's; I put up my red flag when my king comes.' I was the king, you see, she meant. And now, Sir, look at her! I believe she would be glad if I was dead; and dead I 've been to her these five years — ever since you all of you had the small-pox: and she never forgave me for going away."

"Indeed, my Lord, though 't was hard to forgive, I think my mistress forgave it," Harry Esmond said; "and remember how eagerly she watched your lordship's return, and how sadly she turned away when she saw your cold looks."

"Damme!" cries out my lord; "would you have had me wait and catch the small-pox? Where the deuce had been the good of that? I 'll bear danger with any man — but not useless danger — no, no. Thank you for nothing. And — you nod your head, and I know very well, Parson Harry, what you mean. There was the — the other affair to make her angry. But is a woman never to forgive a husband who goes a-tripping? Do you take me for a saint?"

"Indeed, Sir, I do not," says Harry, with a smile.

"Since that time my wife 's as cold as the statue at Charing Cross. I tell thee she has no forgiveness in her, Henry. Her coldness blights my whole life, and sends me to the punch-bowl, or driving about the country. My children are not mine, but hers, when we are together. 'T is only when she is out of sight with her abominable cold glances, that run through me, that they 'll come to me, and that I dare to give

them so much as a kiss; and that 's why I take 'em and love 'em in other people's houses, Harry. I'm killed by the very virtue of that proud woman. Virtue! give me the virtue that can forgive; give me the virtue that thinks not of preserving itself, but of making other folks happy. Damme, what matters a scar or two if 't is got in helping a friend in ill fortune?"

And my lord again slapped the table, and took a great draught from the tankard. Harry Esmond admired as he listened to him, and thought how the poor preacher of this self-sacrifice had fled from the small-pox, which the lady had borne so cheerfully, and which had been the cause of so much disunion in the lives of all in this house. "How well men preach," thought the young man, "and each is the example in his own sermon. How each has a story in a dispute, and a true one, too, and both are right, or wrong, as you will!" Harry's heart was pained within him, to watch the struggles and pangs that tore the breast of this kind, manly, friend and protector.

"Indeed, Sir," said he, "*I wish to God that my* mistress could hear you speak as I have heard you; she would know much that would make her life the happier, could she hear it." But my lord flung away with one of his oaths, and a jeer; he said that Parson Harry was a good fellow; but that as for women, all women were alike — all jades, and heartless. So a man dashes a fine vase down, and despises it for being broken. It may be worthless — true: but who had the keeping of it, and who shattered it?

Harry, who would have given his life to make his benefactress and her husband happy, bethought him, now that he saw what my lord's state of mind was,

and that he really had a great deal of that love left in his heart, and ready for his wife's acceptance, if she would take it, whether he could not be a means of reconciliation between these two persons, whom he revered the most in the world. And he cast about how he should break a part of his mind to his mistress, and warn her that in his, Harry's opinion, at least, her husband was still her admirer, and even her lover.

But he found the subject a very difficult one to handle, when he ventured to remonstrate, which he did in the very gravest tone; (for long confidence and reiterated proofs of devotion and loyalty had given him a sort of authority in the house, which he resumed as soon as ever he returned to it;) and with a speech that should have some effect, as, indeed, it was uttered with the speaker's own heart, he ventured most gently to hint to his adored mistress, that she was doing her husband harm by her ill opinion of him; and that the happiness of all the family depended upon setting her right.

She, who was ordinarily calm and most gentle, and full of smiles and soft attentions, flushed up when young Esmond so spoke to her, and rose from her chair, looking at him with a haughtiness and indignation that he had never before known her to display. She was quite an altered being for that moment; and looked an angry Princess insulted by a vassal.

"Have you ever heard me utter a word in my lord's disparagement?" she asked hastily, hissing out her words, and stamping her foot.

"Indeed, no," Esmond said, looking down.

"Are you come to me as his ambassador — *You?*" she continued.

"I would sooner see peace between you than anything else in the world," Harry answered, "and would go of any embassy that had that end."

"So *you* are my lord's go-between?" she went on, not regarding this speech. "You are sent to bid me back into slavery again, and inform me that my lord's favour is graciously restored to his handmaid? He is weary of Covent Garden, is he, that he comes home and would have the fatted calf killed?"

"There 's good authority for it, surely," said Esmond.

"For a son, yes; but my lord is not my son. It was he who cast me away from him. It was he who broke our happiness down, and he bids me to repair it. It was he who showed himself to me at last, as he was, not as I had thought him. It is he who comes before my children stupid and senseless with wine — who leaves our company for that of frequenters of taverns and bagnios — who goes from his home to the city yonder and his friends there, and when he is tired of them returns hither, and expects that I shall kneel and welcome him. And he sends *you* as his chamberlain! What a proud embassy! Monsieur, I make you my compliment of the new place."

"It would be a proud embassy and a happy embassy too, could I bring you and my lord together," Esmond replied.

"I presume you have fulfilled your mission now, Sir. 'T was a pretty one for you to undertake. I don't know whether 't is your Cambridge philosophy or time that has altered your ways of thinking," Lady Castlewood continued, still in a sarcastic tone. "Perhaps you too have learned to love drink, and to hic-

cup over your wine or punch; — which is your worship's favourite liquor? Perhaps you too put up at the Rose on your way through London, and have your acquaintances in Covent Garden. My services to you, Sir, to principal and ambassador, to master and — and lacquey."

"Great Heavens! Madam," cried Harry, "What have I done that thus, for a second time, you insult me? Do you wish me to blush for what I used to be proud of, that I lived on your bounty? Next to doing you a service (which my life would pay for), you know that to receive one from you is my highest pleasure. What wrong have I done you that you should wound me so, cruel woman?"

"What wrong?" she said, looking at Esmond with wild eyes. "Well, none — none that you know of, Harry, or could help. Why did you bring back the small-pox," she added after a pause, "from Castlewood village? You could not help it, could you? Which of us knows whither Fate leads us? But we were all happy, Henry, till then." And Harry went away from this colloquy, thinking still that the estrangement between his patron and his beloved mistress was remediable, and that each had at heart a strong attachment to the other.

The intimacy between the Lords Mohun and Castlewood appeared to increase as long as the former remained in the country; and my Lord of Castlewood especially seemed never to be happy out of his new comrade's sight. They sported together, they drank, they played bowls and tennis: my Lord Castlewood would go for three days to Sark, and bring back my Lord Mohun to Castlewood — where indeed his lord-

ship made himself very welcome to all persons, having a joke or a new game at romps for the children, all the talk of the town for my lord, and music and gallantry and plenty of the *beau langage* for my lady, and for Harry Esmond, who was never tired of hearing his stories of his campaigns and his life at Vienna, Venice, Paris, and the famous cities of Europe which he had visited both in peace and war. And he sang at my lady's harpsichord, and played cards or backgammon, or his new game of billiards with my lord (of whom he invariably got the better); always having a consummate good humour, and bearing himself with a certain manly grace, that might exhibit somewhat of the camp and Alsatia perhaps, but that had its charm and stamped him a gentleman: and his manner to Lady Castlewood was so devoted and respectful, that she soon recovered from the first feelings of dislike which she had conceived against him — nay, before long, began to be interested in his spiritual welfare, and hopeful of his conversion, lending him books of piety, which he promised dutifully to study. With her my lord talked of reform, of settling into quiet life, quitting the court and town, and buying some land in the neighbourhood — though it must be owned that when the two lords were together over their Burgundy after dinner, their talk was very different, and there was very little question of conversion on my Lord Mohun's part. When they got to their second bottle, Harry Esmond used commonly to leave these two noble topers, who, though they talked freely enough, Heaven knows, in his presence (Good Lord, what a set of stories, of Alsatia and Spring Garden, of the taverns and gaming-houses, of the ladies of the court, and mesdames of

the theatres, he can recall out of their godly conversation!) — although I say they talked before Esmond freely, yet they seemed pleased when he went away; and then they had another bottle, and then they fell to cards, and then my Lord Mohun came to her ladyship's drawing-room; leaving his boon companion to sleep off his wine.

'T was a point of honour with the fine gentlemen of those days to lose or win magnificently at their horse-matches, or games of cards and dice — and you could never tell from the demeanour of these two lords afterwards, which had been successful and which the loser at their games. And when my lady hinted to my lord that he played more than she liked, he dismissed her with a "pish," and swore that nothing was more equal than play betwixt gentlemen, if they did but keep it up long enough. And these kept it up long enough, you may be sure. A man of fashion of that time often passed a quarter of his day at cards, and another quarter at drink: I have known many a pretty fellow, who was a wit too, ready of repartee, and possessed of a thousand graces, who would be puzzled if he had to write more than his name.

There is scarce any thoughtful man or woman I suppose, but can look back upon his course of past life and remember some point, trifling as it may have seemed at the time of occurrence, which has nevertheless turned and altered his whole career. 'T is with almost all of us, as in M. Massillon's magnificent image regarding King William, a *grain de sable* that perverts or perhaps overthrows us; and so it was but a light word flung in the air, a mere freak of a per-

verse child's temper, that brought down a whole heap of crushing woes upon that family whereof Harry Esmond formed a part.

Coming home to his dear Castlewood in the third year of his academical course (wherein he had now obtained some distinction, his Latin Poem on the death of the Duke of Glocester, Princess Anne of Denmark's son, having gained him a medal, and introduced him to the society of the University wits), Esmond found his little friend and pupil Beatrix grown to be taller than her mother, a slim and lovely young girl, with cheeks mantling with health and roses: with eyes like stars shining out of azure, with waving bronze hair clustered about the fairest young forehead ever seen: and a mien and shape haughty and beautiful, such as that of the famous antique statue of the Huntress Diana — at one time haughty, rapid, imperious, with eyes and arrows that dart and kill. Harry watched and wondered at this young creature, and likened her in his mind to Artemis with the ringing bow and shafts flashing death upon the children of Niobe; at another time she was coy and melting as Luna shining tenderly upon Endymion. This fair creature, this lustrous Phœbe, was only young as yet, nor had nearly reached her full splendour: but crescent and brilliant, our young gentleman of the University, his head full of poetical fancies, his heart perhaps throbbing with desires undefined, admired this rising young divinity; and gazed at her (though only as at some "bright particular star," far above his earth) with endless delight and wonder. She had been a coquette from the earliest times almost, trying her freaks and jealousies; her wayward frolicks, and winning caresses upon all that

came within her reach; she set her women quarrelling in the nursery, and practised her eyes on the groom as she rode behind him on the pillion.

She was the darling and torment of father and mother. She intrigued with each secretly; and bestowed her fondness and withdrew it, plied them with tears, smiles, kisses, cajolements; — when the mother was angry, as happened often, flew to the father, and sheltering behind him, pursued her victim; when both were displeased, transferred her caresses to the domestics, or watched until she could win back her parents' good graces, either by surprising them into laughter and good humour, or appeasing them by submission and artful humility. She was *sævo læta negotio*, like that fickle goddess Horace describes, and of whose "malicious joy" a great poet of our own has written so nobly — who famous and heroic as he was, was not strong enough to resist the torture of women.

It was but three years before, that the child then but ten years old had nearly managed to make a quarrel between Harry Esmond and his comrade, good-natured phlegmatic Thos. Tusher, who never of his own seeking quarrelled with anybody: by quoting to the latter some silly joke which Harry had made regarding him — (it was the merest, idlest jest, though it near drove two old friends to blows, and I think such a battle would have pleased her) — and from that day Tom kept at a distance from her; and she respected him, and coaxed him sedulously whenever they met. But Harry was much more easily appeased, because he was fonder of the child: and when she made mischief, used cutting speeches, or caused her friends pain; she excused herself for her fault, not by admit-

ting and deploring it, but by pleading not guilty, and asserting innocence so constantly, and with such seeming artlessness, that was impossible to question her plea. In her childhood, they were but mischiefs then which she did; but her power became more fatal as she grew older — as a kitten first plays with a ball, and then pounces on a bird and kills it. 'Tis not to be imagined that Harry Esmond had all this experience at this early stage of his life, whereof he is now writing the history — many things here noted were but known to him in later days. Almost everything Beatrix did or undid seemed good, or at least pardonable, to him then and years afterwards.

It happened, then, that Harry Esmond came home to Castlewood for his last vacation, with good hopes of a fellowship at his college, and a contented resolve to advance his fortune that way. 'T was in the first year of the present century, Mr. Esmond (as far as he knew the period of his birth) being then twenty-two years old. He found his quondam pupil shot up into this beauty of which we have spoken, and promising yet more: her brother, my lord's son, a handsome high-spirited brave lad, generous and frank, and kind to everybody, save perhaps his sister, with whom Frank was at war (and not from his but her fault) — adoring his mother, whose joy he was: and taking her side in the unhappy matrimonial differences which were now permanent, while of course Mistress Beatrix ranged with her father. When heads of families fall out, it must naturally be that their dependents wear the one or the other party's colour; and even in the parliaments in the servants' hall or the stables, Harry, who had an early observant turn, could see which

were my lord's adherents and which my lady's, and conjecture pretty shrewdly how their unlucky quarrel was debated. Our lackies sit in judgment on us. My lord's intrigues may be ever so stealthily conducted, but his valet knows them; and my lady's woman carries her mistress's private history to the servant's scandal-market, and exchanges it against the secrets of other abigails.

CHAPTER XIII.

My Lord leaves us and his evil behind him.

My Lord Mohun (of whose exploits and fame some of the gentlemen of the University had brought down but ugly reports) was once more a guest at Castlewood, and seemingly more intimately allied with my lord even than before. Once in the spring those two noblemen had ridden to Cambridge from Newmarket, whither they had gone for the horse-racing, and had honoured Harry Esmond with a visit at his rooms; after which Doctor Montague, the master of the College, who had treated Harry somewhat haughtily, seeing his familiarity with these great folks, and that my Lord Castlewood laughed and walked with his hand on Harry's shoulder, relented to Mr. Esmond, and condescended to be very civil to him; and some days after his arrival, Harry, laughing, told this story to Lady Esmond, remarking how strange it was that men famous for learning and renowned over Europe, should, nevertheless, so bow down to a title, and cringe to a nobleman, ever so poor. At this Mrs. Beatrix flung up her head, and said, it became those of low origin to respect their betters; that the parsons made themselves a great deal too proud, she thought; and that she liked the way at Lady Sark's best, where the chaplain, though he loved pudding, as all parsons do, always went away before the custard.

"And when I am a parson," says Mr. Esmond, "will you give me no custard, Beatrix?"

"You — you are different," Beatrix answered. "You are of our blood."

"My father was a parson, as you call him," said my lady.

"But mine is a peer of Ireland," says Mistress Beatrix, tossing her head. "Let people know their places. I suppose you will have me go down on my knees and ask a blessing of Mr. Thomas Tusher, that has just been made a curate, and whose mother was a waiting-maid."

And she tossed out of the room, being in one of her flighty humours then.

When she was gone, my lady looked so sad and grave, that Harry asked the cause of her disquietude. She said it was not merely what he said of Newmarket, but what she had remarked, with great anxiety and terror, that my lord, ever since his acquaintance with the Lord Mohun especially, had recurred to his fondness for play, which he had renounced since his marriage.

"But men promise more than they are able to perform in marriage," said my lady, with a sigh. "I fear he has lost large sums; and our property, always small, is dwindling away under this reckless dissipation. I heard of him in London with very wild company. Since his return letters and lawyers are constantly coming and going: he seems to me to have a constant anxiety, though he hides it under boisterousness and laughter. I looked through — through the door last night, and — and before," said my lady, "and saw them at cards after midnight: no estate will bear that extravagance, much less ours, which will be so diminished, that my son will have nothing at all and my poor Beatrix no portion!"

"I wish I could help you, Madam," said Harry Esmond, sighing, and wishing that unavailingly, and for the thousandth time in his life.

"Who can? Only God," said Lady Esmond, "only God, in whose hands we are." And so it is, and for his rule over his family, and for his conduct to wife and children — subjects over whom his power is monarchical, any one who watches the world must think with trembling sometimes of the account which many a man will have to render. For in our society there 's no law to control the King of the Fireside. He is master of property, happiness, — life almost. He is free to punish, to make happy or unhappy, to ruin or to torture. He may kill a wife gradually, and be no more questioned than the Grand Seignior who drowns a slave at midnight. He may make slaves and hypocrites of his children; or friends and freemen; or drive them into revolt and enmity against the natural law of love. I have heard politicians and coffee-houses wiseacres talking over the newspaper, and railing at the tyranny of the French King, and the Emperor, and wondered how these (who are monarchs, too, in their way,) govern their own dominions at home, where each man rules absolute? When the annals of each little reign are shown to the Supreme Master, under whom we hold sovreignty, histories will be laid bare of household tyrants as cruel as Amurath, and as savage as Nero, and as reckless and dissolute as Charles.

If Harry Esmond's patron erred, 't was in the latter way, from a disposition rather self-indulgent than cruel: and he might have been brought back to much better feelings, had time been given to him to bring his repentance to a lasting reform.

As my lord and his friend Lord Mohun were such close companions, Mistress Beatrix chose to be jealous of the latter; and the two gentlemen often entertained each other by laughing, in their rude boisterous way, at the child's freaks of anger and show of dislike. "When thou art old enough, thou shalt marry Lord Mohun," Beatrix's father would say: on which the girl would pout and say, "I would rather marry Tom Tusher." And because the Lord Mohun always showed an extreme gallantry to my Lady Castlewood, whom he professed to admire devotedly, one day, in answer to this old joke of her father's, Beatrix said, "I think my lord would rather marry mamma than marry me; and is waiting till you die to ask her."

The words were said lightly and pertly by the girl one night before supper, as the family party were assembled near the great fire. The two lords, who were at cards, both gave a start; my lady turned as red as scarlet, and bade Mistress Beatrix go to her own chamber: whereupon the girl, putting on, as her wont was, the most innocent air, said, "I am sure I meant no wrong; I am sure mamma talks a great deal more to Harry Esmond than she does to papa, — and she cried when Harry went away, and she never does when papa goes away; and last night she talked to Lord Mohun for ever so long, and sent us out of the room, and cried when we came back, and * * *"

"D—n!" cried out my Lord Castlewood, out of all patience. "Go out of the room, you little viper;" and he started up and flung down his cards.

"Ask Lord Mohun what I said to him, Francis," her ladyship said, rising up with a scared face, but yet with a great and touching dignity and candour in

her look and voice. "Come away with me, Beatrix." Beatrix sprung up too: she was in tears now.

"Dearest Mamma, what have I done?" she asked. "Sure I meant no harm." And she clung to her mother, and the pair went out sobbing together.

"I will tell you what your wife said to me, Frank," my Lord Mohun cried — "Parson Harry may hear it: and, as I hope for heaven, every word I say is true. Last night, with tears in her eyes, your wife implored me to play no more with you at dice or at cards, and you know best whether what she asked was not for your good."

"Of course it was, Mohun," says my lord in a dry hard voice. "Of course, you are a model of a man: and the world knows what a saint you are."

My Lord Mohun was separated from his wife, and had had many affairs of honour: of which women as usual had been the cause.

"I am no saint, though your wife is — and I can answer for my actions as other people must for their words," said my Lord Mohun.

"By G—, my Lord, you shall," cried the other starting up.

"We have another little account to settle first, my Lord," says Lord Mohun. — Whereupon Harry Esmond filled with alarm for the consequences to which this disastrous dispute might lead, broke out into the most vehement expostulations with his patron and his adversary. "Gracious Heavens!" he said, "my Lord, are you going to draw a sword upon your friend in your own house? Can you doubt the honour of a lady who is as pure as Heaven, and would die a thousand times rather than do you a wrong? Are the

idle words of a jealous child to set friends at variance? Has not my mistress, as much as she dared do, besought your lordship, as the truth must be told, to break your intimacy with my Lord Mohun; and to give up the habit which may bring ruin on your family? But for my Lord Mohun's illness, had he not left you?"

"'Faith, Frank, a man with a gouty toe can't run after other men's wives," broke out my Lord Mohun, who indeed was in that way, and with a laugh and look at his swathed limb so frank and comical, that the other dashing his fist across his forehead was caught by that infectious good humour, and said with his oath, "— it, Harry, I believe thee," and so this quarrel was over, and the two gentlemen, at swords drawn but just now, dropped their points and shook hands.

Beati pacifici. "Go bring my lady back," said Harry's patron. Esmond went away only too glad to be the bearer of such good news. He found her at the door; she had been listening there, but went back as he came. She took both his hands, hers were marble cold. She seemed as if she would fall on his shoulder. "Thank you, and God bless you, my dear brother Harry," she said. She kissed his hand, Esmond felt her tears upon it: and leading her into the room, and up to my lord, the Lord Castlewood with an outbreak of feeling and affection such as he had not exhibited for many a long day, took his wife to his heart, and bent over and kissed her and asked her pardon.

"'T is time for me to go to roost. I will have my gruel a-bed," said my Lord Mohun: and limped off comically on Harry Esmond's arm. "By George, that

woman is a pearl," he said; "and 't is only a pig that wouldn't value her. Have you seen the vulgar trapesing orange-girl whom Esmond —" but here Mr. Esmond interrupted him, saying that these were not affairs for him to know.

My lord's gentleman came in to wait upon his master, who was no sooner in his nightcap and dressing-gown than he had another visitor whom his host insisted on sending to him: and this was no other than the Lady Castlewood herself with the toast and gruel, which her husband bade her make and carry with her own hands into her guest.

Lord Castlewood stood looking after his wife as she went on this errand, and as he looked, Harry Esmond could not but gaze on him, and remarked in his patron's face an expression of love, and grief, and care, which very much moved and touched the young man. Lord Castlewood's hands fell down at his sides, and his head on his breast, and presently he said:

"You heard what Mohun said, parson?"

"That my lady was a saint?"

"That there are two accounts to settle. I have been going wrong these five years, Harry Esmond. Ever since you brought that damned small-pox into the house, there has been a fate pursuing me, and I had best have died of it, and not run away from it, like a coward. I left Beatrix with her relations, and went to London; and I fell among thieves, Harry, and I got back to confounded cards and dice, which I hadn't touched since my marriage — no, not since I was in the Duke's Guard, with those wild Mohocks. And I have been playing worse and worse, and going

deeper and deeper into it; and I owe Mohun two thousand pounds now; and when it 's paid I am little better than a beggar. I don't like to look my boy in the face: he hates me, I know he does. And I have spent Beaty's little portion; and the Lord knows what will come if I live; the best thing I can do is to die, and release what portion of the estate is redeemable for the boy."

Mohun was as much master at Castlewood as the owner of the Hall itself; and his equipages filled the stables, where, indeed, there was room in plenty for many more horses than Harry Esmond's impoverished patron could afford to keep. He had arrived on horseback with his people; but when his gout broke out my Lord Mohun sent to London for a light chaise he had, drawn by a pair of small horses, and running as swift, wherever roads were good, as a Laplander's sledge. When this carriage came, his lordship was eager to drive the Lady Castlewood abroad in it, and did so many times, and at a rapid pace, greatly to his companion's enjoyment, who loved the swift motion and the healthy breezes over the downs which lie hard upon Castlewood, and stretch thence towards the sea. As this amusement was very pleasant to her, and her lord, far from showing any mistrust of her intimacy with Lord Mohun, encouraged her to be his companion; as if willing, by his present extreme confidence, to make up for any past mistrust which his jealousy had shown; the Lady Castlewood enjoyed herself freely in this harmless diversion, which, it must be owned, her guest was very eager to give her; and it seemed that she grew the more free with Lord Mohun, and pleased with his company, because of

some sacrifice which his gallantry was pleased to make in her favour.

Seeing the two gentlemen constantly at cards still of evenings, Harry Esmond one day deplored to his mistress that this fatal infatuation of her lord should continue; and now they seemed reconciled together, begged his lady to hint to her husband that he should play no more.

But Lady Castlewood, smiling archly and gaily, said she would speak to him presently, and that for a few nights more at least, he might be let to have his amusement.

"Indeed, Madam," said Harry, "you know not what it costs you; and 't is easy for any observer who knows the game, to see that Lord Mohun is by far the stronger of the two."

"I know he is," says my lady, still with exceeding good humour: "he is not only the best player, but the kindest player in the world."

"Madam, Madam," Esmond cried, transported and provoked. "Debts of honour must be paid some time or other; and my master will be ruined if he goes on."

"Harry, shall I tell you a secret?" my lady replied, with kindness and pleasure still in her eyes. "Francis will not be ruined if he goes on; he will be rescued if he goes on. I repent of having spoken and thought unkindly of the Lord Mohun when he was here in the past year. He is full of much kindness and good; and 't is my belief that we shall bring him to better things. I have lent him Tillotson and your favourite Bishop Taylor, and he is much touched, he says; and as a proof of his repentance (and herein lies my secret) — what do you think he is doing with

Francis? He is letting poor Frank win his money back again. He hath won already at the last four nights; and my Lord Mohun says that he will not be the means of injuring poor Frank and my dear children."

"And in God's name, what do you return him for this sacrifice?" asked Esmond, aghast: who knew enough of men, and of this one in particular, to be aware that such a finished rake gave nothing for nothing. "How, in Heaven's name, are you to pay him?"

"Pay him! With a mother's blessing and a wife's prayers!" cries my lady, clasping her hands together. Harry Esmond did not know whether to laugh, to be angry, or to love his dear mistress more than ever for the obstinate innocency with which she chose to regard the conduct of a man of the world, whose designs he knew better how to interpret. He told the lady, guardedly, but so as to make his meaning quite clear to her, what he knew in respect of the former life and conduct of this nobleman; of other women against whom he had plotted, and whom he had overcome; of the conversation which he, Harry himself had had with Lord Mohun, wherein the lord made a boast of his libertinism, and frequently avowed that he held all women to be fair game (as his lordship styled this pretty sport), and that they were all, without exception, to be won. And the return Harry had for his entreaties and remonstrances was a fit of anger on Lady Castlewood's part, who would not listen to his accusations, she said, and retorted that he himself must be very wicked and perverted, to suppose evil designs, where she was sure none were meant. "And this is the good meddlers get of interfering," Harry

thought to himself, with much bitterness: and his perplexity and annoyance were only the greater, because he could not speak to my Lord Castlewood himself upon a subject of this nature, or venture to advise or warn him regarding a matter so very sacred as his own honour, of which my lord was naturally the best guardian.

But though Lady Castlewood would listen to no advice from her young dependent, and appeared indignantly to refuse it when offered, Harry had the satisfaction to find that she adopted the council which she professed to reject; for the next day she pleaded a headache, when my Lord Mohun would have had her drive out, and the next day the headache continued; and next day, in a laughing gay way she proposed that the children should take her place in his lordship's car, for they would be charmed with a ride of all things; and she must not have all the pleasure for herself. My lord gave them a drive with a very good grace, though I daresay with rage and disappointment inwardly — not that his heart was very seriously engaged in his designs upon this simple lady; but the life of such men is often one of intrigue, and they can no more go through the day without a woman to pursue, than a fox-hunter without his sport after breakfast.

Under an affected carelessness of demeanour, and though there was no outward demonstration of doubt upon his patron's part since the quarrel between the two lords, Harry yet saw that Lord Castlewood was watching his guest very narrowly: and caught signs of distrust and smothered rage (as Harry thought) which foreboded no good. On the point of honour Esmond

knew how touchy his patron was: and watched him almost as a physician watches a patient, and it seemed to him that this one was slow to take the disease, though he could not throw off the poison when once it had mingled with his blood. We read in Shakespeare (whom the writer for his part considers to be far beyond Mr. Congreve, Mr. Dryden, or any of the wits of the present period) that when jealousy is once declared, nor poppy nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups of the East, will ever soothe it or medicine it away.

In fine, the symptoms seemed to be so alarming to this young physician (who indeed young as he was had felt the kind pulses of all those dear kinsmen), that Harry thought it would be his duty to warn my Lord Mohun, and let him know that his designs were suspected and watched. So one day when in rather a pettish humour, his lordship had sent to Lady Castlewood, who had promised to drive with him, and now refused to come, Harry said — "My lord, if you will kindly give me a place by your side I will thank you; I have much to say to you, and would like to speak to you alone."

"You honour me by giving me your confidence, Mr. Henry Esmond," says the other, with a very grand bow. My lord was always a fine gentleman, and young as he was there was that in Esmond's manner which showed that he was a gentleman too, and that none might take a liberty with him — so the pair went out, and mounted the little carriage which was in waiting for them in the court, with its two little cream-coloured Hanoverian horses covered with splendid furniture and champing at the bit.

"My Lord," says Harry Esmond, after they were got into the country, and pointing to my Lord Mohun's foot, which was swathed in flannel, and put up rather ostentatiously on a cushion — "my Lord, I studied medicine at Cambridge."

"Indeed, Parson Henry," says he; "and are you going to take out a diploma: and cure your fellow-students of the —"

"Of the gout," says Harry, interrupting him, and looking him hard in the face, "I know a good deal about the gout."

"I hope you may never have it. 'T is an infernal disease," says my lord, "and its twinges are diabolical. Ah!" and he made a dreadful wry face, as if he just felt a twinge.

"Your lordship would be much better if you took off all that flannel — it only serves to inflame the toe," Harry continued, looking his man full in the face.

"O! it only serves to inflame the toe, does it?" says the other, with an innocent air.

"If you took off that flannel, and flung that absurd slipper away and wore a boot," continues Harry.

"You recommend me boots, Mr. Esmond?" asks my lord.

"Yes, boots and spurs. I saw your lordship three days ago run down the gallery fast enough," Harry goes on. "I am sure that taking gruel at night is not so pleasant as claret to your lordship; and besides it keeps your lordship's head cool for play, whilst my patron's is hot and flustered with drink."

"'S death, Sir, you dare not say that I don't play

fair?" cries my lord, whipping his horses, which went away at a gallop.

"You are cool when my lord is drunk," Harry continued; "your lordship gets the better of my patron. I have watched you as I looked up from my books."

"You young Argus!" says Lord Mohun, who liked Harry Esmond, — and for whose company and wit, and a certain daring manner, Harry had a great liking too — "You young Argus! you may look with all your hundred eyes and see we play fair. I 've played away an estate of a night, and I 've played my shirt off my back; and I 've played away my perriwig and gone home in a night-cap. But no man can say I ever took an advantage of him beyond the advantage of the game. I played a dice-cogging scoundrel in Alsatia for his ears and won 'em, and have one of 'em in my lodging in Bow Street in a bottle of spirits. Harry Mohun will play any man for anything — always would."

"You are playing awful stakes, my Lord, in my patron's house," Harry said, "and more games than are on the cards."

"What do you mean, Sir?" cries my lord, turning round, with a flush on his face.

"I mean," answers Harry in a sarcastic tone, "that your gout is well — if ever you had it."

"Sir!" cries my lord, getting hot.

"And to tell the truth I believe your lordship has no more gout than I have. At any rate, change of air will do you good, my Lord Mohun. And I mean fairly that you had better go from Castlewood."

"And were you appointed to give me this mes-

sage?" cries the Lord Mohun. "Did Frank Esmond commission you?"

"No one did. 'T was the honour of my family that commissioned me."

"And you are prepared to answer this?" cries the other, furiously lashing his horses.

"Quite, my Lord: your lordship will upset the carriage if you whip so hotly."

"By George, you have a brave spirit!" my lord cried out, bursting into a laugh. "I suppose 't is that infernal *botte de Jesuite* that makes you so bold," he added.

"'T is the peace of the family I love best in the world," Harry Esmond said warmly — "'t is the honour of a noble benefactor — the happiness of my dear mistress and her children. I owe them everything in life, my lord: and would lay it down for any one of them. What brings you here to disturb this quiet household? What keeps you lingering month after month in the country? What makes you feign illness and invent pretexts for delay? Is it to win my poor patron's money? Be generous, my lord, and spare his weakness for the sake of his wife and children. Is it to practice upon the simple heart of a virtuous lady? You might as well storm the Tower single-handed. But you may blemish her name by light comments on it or by lawless pursuits — and I don't deny that 't is in your power to make her unhappy. Spare these innocent people and leave them."

"By the Lord, I believe thou hast an eye to the pretty Puritan thyself, Master Harry," says my lord, with his reckless, good-humoured laugh, and as if he

had been listening with interest to the passionate appeal of the young man. "Whisper, Harry. Art thou in love with her thyself? Hath tipsy Harry Esmond come by the way of all flesh?"

"My lord, my lord," cried Harry, his face flushing and his eyes filling as he spoke, "I never had a mother, but I love this lady as one. I worship her as a devotee worships a saint. To hear her name spoken lightly seems blasphemy to me. Would you dare think of your own mother so, or suffer any one so to speak of her! It is a horror to me to fancy that any man should think of her impurely. I implore you, I beseech you, to leave her. Danger will come out of it."

"Danger, psha!" says my lord, giving a cut to the horses, which at this minute — for we were got on to the Downs — fairly ran off into a gallop that no pulling could stop. The rein broke in Lord Mohun's hands, and the furious beasts scampered madly forwards, the carriage swaying to and fro, and the persons within it holding on to the sides as best they might, until seeing a great ravine before them, where an upset was inevitable, the two gentlemen leapt for their lives, each out of his side of the chaise. Harry Esmond was quit for a fall on the grass, which was so severe, that it stunned him for a minute; but he got up presently very sick, and bleeding at the nose, but with no other hurt. The Lord Mohun was not so fortunate; he fell on his head against a stone, and lay on the ground dead to all appearance.

This misadventure happened as the gentlemen were on their return homewards; and my Lord Castlewood, with his son and daughter, who were going out for

a ride, met the ponies as they were galloping with the car behind, the broken traces entangling their heels, and my lord's people turned and stopped them. It was young Frank who spied out Lord Mohun's scarlet coat as he lay on the ground, and the party made up to that unfortunate gentleman and Esmond, who was now standing over him. His large perriwig and feathered hat had fallen off, and he was bleeding profusely from a wound on the forehead, and looking, and being, indeed, a corpse.

"Great God! he 's dead!" says my lord. "Ride some one: fetch a doctor — stay. I 'll go home and bring back Tusher; he knows surgery," and my lord, with his son after him, galloped away.

They were scarce gone when Harry Esmond, who was, indeed, but just come to himself, bethought him of a similar accident which he had seen on a ride from Newmarket to Cambridge, and taking off a sleeve of my lord's coat, Harry, with a penknife, opened a vein in his arm, and was greatly relieved, after a moment, to see the blood flow. He was near half an hour before he came to himself, by which time Doctor Tusher and little Frank arrived, and found my lord not a corpse indeed, but as pale as one.

After a time, and when he was able to bear motion, they put my lord upon a groom's horse, and gave the other to Esmond, the men walking on each side of my lord, to support him, if need were, and worthy Doctor Tusher with them. Little Frank and Harry rode together at a foot pace.

When we rode together home, the boy said: "We met mamma, who was walking on the terrace with

the Doctor, and papa frightened her, and told her you were dead * * *"

"That I was dead?" asks Harry.

"Yes. Papa says: 'Here 's poor Harry killed, my dear;' on which mamma gives a great scream, and oh, Harry! she drops down; and I thought she was dead, too. And you never saw such a way as papa was in: he swore one of his great oaths; and he turned quite pale; and then he began to laugh somehow, and he told the Doctor to take his horse, and me to follow him; and we left him. And I looked back, and saw him dashing water out of the fountain on to mamma. Oh, she was so frightened!"

Musing upon this curious history — for my Lord Mohun's name was Henry too, and they called each other Frank and Harry often — and not a little disturbed and anxious, Esmond rode home. His dear lady was on the terrace still, one of her women with her, and my lord no longer there. There are steps and a little door thence down into the road. My lord passed, looking very ghastly, with a handkerchief over his head, and without his hat and perriwig, which a groom carried, but his politeness did not desert him, and he made a bow to the lady above.

"Thank Heaven you are safe," she said.

"And so is Harry, too, Mamma," says little Frank, "huzzay!"

Harry Esmond got off the horse to run to his mistress, as did little Frank, and one of the grooms took charge of the two beasts, while the other, hat

and perriwig in hand, walked by my lord's bridle to the front gate, which lay half a mile away.

"Oh, my boy! what a fright you have given me!" Lady Castlewood said, when Harry Esmond came up, greeting him with one of her shining looks, and a voice of tender welcome; and she was so kind as to kiss the young man ('t was the second time she had so honoured him), and she walked into the house between him and her son, holding a hand of each.

CHAPTER XIV.

We ride after him to London.

After a repose of a couple of days, the Lord Mohun was so far recovered of his hurt as to be able to announce his departure for the next morning: when, accordingly, he took leave of Castlewood, proposing to ride to London by easy stages, and lie two nights upon the road. His host treated him with a studied and ceremonious courtesy, certainly different from my lord's usual frank and careless demeanour; but there was no reason to suppose that the two lords parted otherwise than good friends, though Harry Esmond remarked that my Lord Viscount only saw his guest in company of other persons, and seemed to avoid being alone with him. Nor did he ride any distance with Lord Mohun, as his custom was with most of his friends, whom he was always eager to welcome and unwilling to lose: but contented himself, when his lordship's horses were announced, and their owner appeared booted for his journey, to take a courteous leave of the ladies of Castlewood, by following the Lord Mohun down stairs to his horses, and by bowing and wishing him a good-day in the court-yard. "I shall see you in London before very long, Mohun," my lord said, with a smile: "when we will settle our accounts together."

"Do not let them trouble you, Frank," said the other, good-naturedly, and holding out his hand looked rather surprised at the grim and stately manner in

which his host received his parting salutation: and so, followed by his people, he rode away.

Harry Esmond was witness of the departure. It was very different to my lord's coming, for which great preparation had been made (the old house putting on its best appearance to welcome its guest), and there was a sadness and constraint about all persons that day, which filled Mr. Esmond with gloomy forebodings, and sad indefinite apprehensions. Lord Castlewood stood at the door watching his guest and his people as they went out under the arch of the outer gate. When he was there, Lord Mohun turned once more, my Lord Viscount slowly raised his beaver and bowed. His face wore a peculiar livid look, Harry thought. He cursed and kicked away his dogs, which came jumping about him — then he walked up to the fountain in the centre of the court, and leaned against a pillar and looked into the basin. As Esmond crossed over to his own room, late the chaplain's, on the other side of the court, and turned to enter in at the low door, he saw Lady Castlewood looking through the curtains of the great window of the drawing-room over head at my lord as he stood regarding the fountain. There was in the court a peculiar silence somehow: and the scene remained long in Esmond's memory: — the sky bright over-head: the buttresses of the building, and the sun-dial casting shadow over the gilt *memento mori* inscribed underneath: the two dogs, a black greyhound and a spaniel nearly white, the one with his face up to the sun, and the other snuffing amongst the grass and stones, and my lord leaning over the fountain, which was plashing audibly. 'T is strange how that scene, and the sound of that fountain remain fixed on the memory of a man

who has beheld a hundred sights of splendour, and danger too, of which he has kept no account.

It was Lady Castlewood — she had been laughing all the morning, and especially gay and lively before her husband and his guest, who, as soon as the two gentlemen went together from her room, ran to Harry, the expression of her countenance quite changed now, and with a face and eyes full of care, and said, "Follow them, Harry, I am sure something has gone wrong." And so it was that Esmond was made an eaves-dropper at his lady's orders: and retired to his own chamber, to give himself time in truth to try and compose a story which would soothe his mistress, for he could not but have his own apprehension that some serious quarrel was pending between the two gentlemen.

And now for several days the little company at Castlewood sate at table as of evenings: this care, though unnamed and invisible, being nevertheless present alway, in the minds of at least three persons there. My lord was exceeding gentle and kind. Whenever he quitted the room, his wife's eyes followed him. He behaved to her with a kind of mournful courtesy and kindness remarkable in one of his blunt ways and ordinarily rough manner. He called her by her Christian name often and fondly, was very soft and gentle with the children, especially with the boy, whom he did not love. And being lax about church generally, he went thither and performed all the offices (down even to listening to Doctor Tusher's sermon) with great devotion.

"He paces his room all night: what is it? Henry find out what it is," Lady Castlewood said constantly

to her young dependent. "He has sent three letters to London," she said, another day.

"Indeed, Madam, they were to a lawyer," Harry answered, who knew of these letters and had seen a part of the correspondence, which related to a new loan my lord was raising: and when the young man remonstrated with his patron, my lord said, "he was only raising money to pay off an old debt on the property which must be discharged."

Regarding the money, Lady Castlewood was not in the least anxious. Few fond women feel money-distress; indeed you can hardly give a woman a greater pleasure than to bid her pawn her diamonds for the man she loves: and I remember hearing Mr. Congreve say of my Lord Marlborough, that the reason why my lord was so successful with women as a young man was, because he took money of them. "There are few men who will make such a sacrifice for them," says Mr. Congreve, who knew a part of the sex pretty well.

Harry Esmond's vacation was just over, and, as hath been said, he was preparing to return to the University for his last term before taking his degree and entering into the Church. He had made up his mind for this office, not indeed with that reverence which becomes a man about to enter upon a duty so holy, but with a worldly spirit of acquiescence in the prudence of adopting that profession for his calling. But his reasoning was that he owed all to the family of Castlewood, and loved better to be near them than anywhere else in the world; that he might be useful to his benefactors, who had the utmost confidence in him and affection for him in return; that he might aid

in bringing up the young heir of the house and acting as his governor; that he might continue to be his dear patron's and mistress's friend and adviser, who both were pleased to say that they should ever look upon him as such: and so, by making himself useful to those he loved best, he proposed to console himself for giving up of any schemes of ambition which he might have had in his own bosom. Indeed, his mistress had told him that she would not have him leave her; and whatever she commanded was will to him.

The Lady Castlewood's mind was greatly relieved in the last few days of this well-remembered holiday time, by my lord's announcing one morning, after the post had brought him letters from London, in a careless tone, that the Lord Mohun was gone to Paris, and was about to make a great journey in Europe; and though Lord Castlewood's own gloom did not wear off, or his behaviour alter, yet this cause of anxiety being removed from his lady's mind, she began to be more hopeful and easy in her spirits, striving, too, with all her heart, and by all the means of soothing in her power, to call back my lord's cheerfulness and dissipate his moody humour.

He accounted for it himself, by saying that he was out of health; that he wanted to see his physician; that he would go to London, and consult Doctor Cheyne. It was agreed that his lordship and Harry Esmond should make the journey as far as London together; and of a Monday morning, the 10th of October, in the year 1700, they set forwards towards London on horseback. The day before being Sunday, and the rain pouring down, the family did not visit

church; and at night my lord read the service to his family, very finely, and with a peculiar sweetness and gravity, — speaking the parting benediction, Harry thought, as solemn as ever he heard it. And he kissed and embraced his wife and children before they went to their own chambers with more fondness than he was ordinarily wont to show, and with a solemnity and feeling, of which they thought in after days with no small comfort.

They took horse the next morning (after adieux from the family as tender as on the night previous), lay that night on the road, and entered London at nightfall; my lord going to the Trumpet, in the Cockpit, Whitehall, an house used by the military in his time as a young man, and accustomed by his lordship ever since.

An hour after my lord's arrival (which showed that his visit had been arranged before-hand), my lord's man of business arrived from Gray's Inn; and thinking that his patron might wish to be private with the lawyer, Esmond was for leaving them: but my lord said his business was short; introduced Mr. Esmond particularly to the lawyer, who had been engaged for the family in the old lord's time; who said that he had paid the money, as desired that day, to my Lord Mohun himself, at his lodgings in Bow Street; that his lordship had expressed some surprise, as it was not customary to employ lawyers, he said, in such transactions between men of honour; but, nevertheless, he had returned my Lord Viscount's note of hand, which he held at his client's disposition.

"I thought the Lord Mohun had been in Paris!" cried Mr. Esmond, in great alarm and astonishment.

"He is come back at my invitation," said my Lord Viscount. "We have accounts to settle together."

"I pray Heaven they are over, Sir," says Esmond.

"Oh, quite," replied the other, looking hard at the young man. "He was rather troublesome about that money which I told you I had lost to him at play. And now 'tis paid, and we are quits on that score, and we shall meet good friends again."

"My Lord," cried out Esmond, "I am sure you are deceiving me, and that there is a quarrel between the Lord Mohun and you."

"Quarrel — pish! We shall sup together this very night, and drink a bottle. Every man is ill-humoured, who loses such a sum as I have lost. But now 't is paid, and my anger is gone with it."

"Where shall we sup, Sir?" says Harry.

"*We!* Let some gentlemen wait till they are asked," says my Lord Viscount, with a laugh. "You go to Duke Street, and see Mr. Betterton. You love the play, I know. Leave me to follow my own devices; and in the morning we 'll breakfast together, with what appetite we may, as the play says."

"By G—!" my Lord, I will not leave you this night," says Harry Esmond. "I think I know the cause of your dispute. I swear to you 't is nothing. On the very day the accident befell Lord Mohun, I was speaking to him about it. I know that nothing has passed but idle gallantry on his part."

"You know that nothing has passed but idle gallantry between Lord Mohun and my wife," says my lord, in a thundering voice — "you knew of this, and didn't tell me?"

"I knew more of it than my dear mistress did herself, Sir — a thousand times more. How was she, who was as innocent as a child, to know what was the meaning of the covert addresses of a villain?"

"A villain he is, you allow, and would have taken my wife away from me."

"Sir, she is as pure as an angel," cried young Esmond.

"Have I said a word against her?" shrieks out my lord. "Did I ever doubt that she was pure? It would have been the last day of her life when I did. Do you fancy I think that *she* would go astray? No, she hasn't passion enough for that. She neither sins nor forgives. I know her temper — and now I've lost her: by Heaven, I love her ten thousand times more than ever I did — yes, when she was young and as beautiful as an angel — when she smiled at me in her old father's house, and used to lie in wait for me there as I came from hunting — when I used to fling my head down on her little knees and cry like a child on her lap — and swear I would reform and drink no more, and play no more, and follow women no more; when all the men of the Court used to be following her — when she used to look with her child more beautiful, by George, than the Madonna in the Queen's Chapel. I am not good like her, I know it. Who is, by Heaven, who is? I tired and wearied her, I know that very well. I could not talk to her. You men of wit and books could do that and I couldn't — I felt I couldn't. Why, when you was but a boy of fifteen I could hear you two together talking your poetry and your books till I was in such a rage that I was fit to strangle you. But you were always a good lad,

Harry, and I loved you, you know I did. And I felt she didn't belong to me: and the children don't. And I besotted myself, and gambled, and drank, and took to all sorts of devilries out of despair and fury. And now comes this Mohun, and she likes him, I know she likes him."

"Indeed, and on my soul, you are wrong, Sir," Esmond cried.

"She takes letters from him," cries my lord — "look here, Harry," and he pulled out a paper with a brown stain of blood upon it. "It fell from him that day he wasn't killed. One of the grooms picked it up from the ground and gave it me. Here it is in their d—d comedy jargon. 'Divine Gloriana — Why look so coldly on your slave who adores you? Have you no compassion on the tortures you have seen me suffering? Do you vouchsafe no reply to billets that are written with the blood of my heart.' She had more letters from him."

"But she answered none," cries Esmond.

"That 's not Mohun's fault," says my lord, "and I will be revenged on him, as God 's in heaven, I will."

"For a light word or two, will you risk your lady's honour and your family's happiness, my Lord," Esmond interposed beseechingly.

"Psha — there shall be no question of my wife's honour," said my lord; "we can quarrel on plenty of grounds beside. If I live, that villain will be punished: if I fall, my family will be only the better: there will only be a spendthrift the less to keep in the world: and Frank has better teaching than his father. My mind is made up, Harry Esmond, and whatever the

event is I am easy about it. I leave my wife and you as guardians to the children."

Seeing that my lord was bent upon pursuing this quarrel, and that no entreaties would draw him from it, Harry Esmond (then of a hotter and more impetuous nature than now, when care and reflection, and grey hairs have calmed him) thought it was his duty to stand by his kind generous patron, and said, — "My Lord, if you are determined upon war, you must not go into it alone. 'T is the duty of our house to stand by its chief: and I should neither forgive myself nor you if you did not call me, or I should be absent from you at a moment of danger."

"Why, Harry, my poor boy, you are bred for a parson," says my lord, taking Esmond by the hand very kindly: "and it were a great pity that you should meddle in the matter."

"Your lordship thought of being a churchman, once," Harry answered, "and your father's orders did not prevent him fighting at Castlewood against the Roundheads. Your enemies are mine, Sir: I can use the foils, as you have seen, indifferent well, and don't think I shall be afraid when the buttons are taken off 'em." And then Harry explained, with some blushes and hesitation (for the matter was delicate, and he feared lest, by having put himself forward in the quarrel, he might have offended his patron), how he had himself expostulated with the Lord Mohun, and proposed to measure swords with him if need were, and he could not be got to withdraw peaceably in this dispute. "And I should have beat him, Sir," says Harry, laughing. "He never could parry that *botte* I brought from Cambridge. Let us have half an hour

of it, and rehearse — I can teach it your lordship: 't is the most delicate point in the world, and if you miss it — your adversary's sword is through you."

"By George, Harry! you ought to be the head of the house," says my lord, gloomily. "You had been better Lord Castlewood than a lazy sot like me," he added, drawing his hand across his eyes, and surveying his kinsman with very kind affectionate glances.

"Let us take our coats off and have half an hour's practice before night-fall," says Harry, after thankfully grasping his patron's manly hand.

"You are but a little bit of a lad," says my lord, good-humouredly; "but in faith, I believe you could do for that fellow. No, my boy," he continued, "I 'll have none of your feints and tricks of stabbing: I can use my sword pretty well too, and will fight my own quarrel my own way."

"But I shall be by to see fair play," cries Harry.

"Yes, God bless you — you shall be by."

"When is it, Sir?" says Harry, for he saw that the matter had been arranged privately, and before hand, by my lord.

"'T is arranged thus: I sent off a courier to Jack Westbury to say that I wanted him specially. He knows for what, and will be here presently, and drink part of that bottle of sack. Then we shall go to the theatre in Duke Street, where we shall meet Mohun; and then we shall all go sup at the Rose or the Grey-hound. Then we shall call for cards, and there will be probably a difference over the cards — and then, God help us! — either a wicked villain and traitor shall go out of the world, or a poor worthless devil, that doesn't care to remain in it. I am better away,

Hal, — my wife will be all the happier when I am gone," says my lord, with a groan, that tore the heart of Harry Esmond so that he fairly broke into a sob over his patron's kind hand.

"The business was talked over with Mohun before he left home — Castlewood I mean" — my lord went on. "I took the letter into him, which I had read, and I charged him with his villany, and he could make no denial of it, only he said that my wife was innocent."

"And so she is; before Heaven, my Lord, she is!" cries Harry.

"No doubt, no doubt. They always are," says my lord. "No doubt, when she heard he was killed, she fainted from accident."

"But, my Lord, *my* name is Harry," cried out Esmond, burning red. "You told my Lady, 'Harry was killed!'"

"Damnation! shall I fight you, too?" shouts my lord, in a fury. "Are you, you little serpent, warmed by my fire, going to sting — *you?* — No, my boy, you're an honest boy; you are a good boy." (And here he broke from rage into tears even more cruel to see.) "You are an honest boy, and I love you; and, by Heavens, I am so wretched that I don't care what sword it is that ends me. Stop, here's Jack Westbury. Well, Jack! Welcome, old boy! This is my kinsman, Harry Esmond."

"Who brought your bowls for you at Castlewood, Sir," says Harry, bowing: and the three gentlemen sate down and drank of that bottle of sack which was prepared for them.

"Harry is number three," says my lord. "You

needn't be afraid of him, Jack." And the Colonel gave a look, as much as to say, "Indeed, he don't look as if I need." And then my lord explained what he had only told by hints before. When he quarrelled with Lord Mohun he was indebted to his lordship in a sum of sixteen hundred pounds, for which Lord Mohun said he proposed to wait until my Lord Viscount should pay him. My lord had raised the sixteen hundred pounds and sent them to Lord Mohun that morning, and before quitting home had put his affairs into order, and was now quite ready to abide the issue of the quarrel.

When we had drunk a couple of bottles of sack, a coach was called, and the three gentlemen went to the Duke's Play-house, as agreed. The play was one of Mr. Wycherley's — "Love in a Wood."

Harry Esmond has thought of that play ever since with a kind of terror, and of Mrs. Bracegirdle, the actress who performed the girl's part in the comedy. She was disguised as a page, and came and stood before the gentlemen as they sate on the stage, and looked over her shoulder with a pair of arch black eyes, and laughed at my lord, and asked what ailed the gentlemen from the country, and had he had bad news from Bullock Fair?

Between the acts of the play the gentlemen crossed over and conversed freely. There were two of Lord Mohun's party, Captain Macartney, in a military habit, and a gentleman in a suit of blue velvet and silver, in a fair perriwig, with a rich fall of point of Venice lace — my lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland. My lord had a paper of oranges, which he ate and offered to the actresses, joking with them And Mrs.

Bracegirdle, when my Lord Mohun said something rude, turned on him, and asked him what he did there, and whether he and his friends had come to stab any-body else as they did poor Will Mountford? My lord's dark face grew darker at this taunt, and wore a mischievous fatal look. They that saw it remembered it, and said so afterward.

When the play was ended the two parties joined company; and my Lord Castlewood then proposed that they should go to a tavern and sup. Lockit's, the Greyhound, in Charing Cross, was the house selected. All six marched together that way; the three lords going ahead, Lord Mohun's captain, and Colonel Westbury, and Harry Esmond, walking behind them. As they walked, Westbury told Harry Esmond about his old friend Dick the Scholar, who had got promotion, and was Cornet of the Guards, and had wrote a book called the "Christian Hero," and had all the Guards to laugh at him for his pains, for the Christian Hero was breaking the commandments constantly, Westbury said, and had fought one or two duels already. And, in a lower tone, Westbury besought young Mr. Es-mond to take no part in the quarrel. "There was no need for more seconds than one," said the Colonel, "and the Captain or Lord Warwick might easily with-draw." But Harry said no; he was bent on going through with the business. Indeed, he had a plan in his head, which, he thought, might prevent my Lord Viscount from engaging.

They went in at the bar of the tavern, and desired a private room and wine and cards, and when the drawer had brought these, they began to drink and

called healths, and as long as the servants were in the room appeared very friendly.

Harry Esmond's plan was no other than to engage in talk with Lord Mohun, to insult him, and so get the first of the quarrel. So when cards were proposed he offered to play. "Psha," says my Lord Mohun (whether wishing to save Harry, or not choosing to try the *botte de Jesuite*, it is not to be known) — "Young gentlemen from College should not play these stakes. You are too young."

"Who dares say I am too young?" broke out Harry. "Is your lordship afraid?"

"Afraid!" cries out Mohun.

But my good Lord Viscount saw the move — "I 'll play you for ten moidores, Mohun," says he — "You silly boy, we don't play for groats here as you do at Cambridge:" and Harry who had no such sum in his pocket (for his half-year's salary was always pretty well spent before it was due) fell back with rage and vexation in his heart that he had not money enough to stake.

"I 'll stake the young gentleman a crown," says the Lord Mohun's captain.

"I thought crowns were rather scarce with the gentlemen of the army," says Harry.

"Do they birch at College?" says the Captain.

"They birch fools," says Harry, "and they cane bullies, and they fling puppies into the water."

"Faith then there's some escapes drowning," says the Captain, who was an Irishman; and all the gentlemen began to laugh, and made poor Harry only more angry.

My Lord Mohun presently snuffed a candle. It was when the drawers brought in fresh bottles and glasses and were in the room — on which my Lord Viscount said — "The Deuce take you, Mohun, how damned awkward you are. Light the candle, you drawer."

"Damned awkward is a damned awkward expression, my Lord," says the other. "Town gentlemen don't use such words — or ask pardon if they do."

"I'm a country gentleman," says my Lord Viscount.

"I see it by your manner," says my Lord Mohun. "No man shall say damned awkward to me."

"I fling the words in your face, my Lord," says the other, "shall I send the cards too?"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen! before the servants!" — cry out Colonel Westbury and the Lord Warwick in a breath. The drawers go out of the room hastily. They tell the people below of the quarrel up stairs.

"Enough has been said," says Colonel Westbury. "Will your lordships meet to-morrow morning."

"Will my Lord Castlewood withdraw his words?" asks the Earl of Warwick.

"My Lord Castlewood will be — first," says Colonel Westbury.

"Then we have nothing for it. Take notice, gentlemen, there have been outrageous words — reparation asked and refused."

"And refused," says my Lord Castlewood, putting on his hat. "Where shall the meeting be? and when?"

"Since my lord refuses me satisfaction, which I deeply regret, there is no time so good as now," says

my Lord Mohun. "Let us have chairs and go to Leicester Field."

"Are your lordship and I to have the honour of exchanging a pass or two," says Colonel Westbury, with a low bow to my Lord of Warwick and Holland.

"It is an honour for me," says my lord, with a profound congée, "to be matched with a gentleman who has been at Mons and Namur."

"Will your Reverence permit me to give you a lesson?" says the Captain.

"Nay nay, gentlemen, two on a side are plenty:" says Harry's patron. "Spare the boy, Captain Macartney," and he shook Harry's hand — for the last time, save one, in his life.

At the bar of the tavern all the gentlemen stopped and my Lord Viscount said, laughing, to the barwoman, that those cards set people sadly a quarrelling; but that the dispute was over now, and the parties were all going away to my Lord Mohun's house, in Bow Street, to drink a bottle more before going to bed.

A half-dozen of chairs were now called, and the six gentlemen stepping into them, the word was privately given to the chairmen to go to Leicester Field, where the gentlemen were set down opposite the Standard Tavern. It was midnight, and the town was a-bed by this time, and only a few lights in the windows of the houses; but the night was bright enough for the unhappy purpose which the disputants came about; and so all six entered into that fatal square, the chairmen standing without the railing and keeping the gate, lest any persons should disturb the meeting.

All that happened there hath been matter of public notoriety, and is recorded for warning to lawless men, in the annals of our country. After being engaged for not more than a couple of minutes, as Harry Esmond thought, (though being occupied at the time with his own adversary's point, which was active, he may not have taken a good note of time,) a cry from the chairmen without, who were smoking their pipes, and leaning over the railings of the field as they watched the dim combat within, announced that some catastrophe had happened which caused Esmond to drop his sword and look round, at which moment his enemy wounded him in the right hand. But the young man did not heed this hurt much, and ran up to the place where he saw his dear master was down.

My lord Mohun was standing over him.

"Are you much hurt, Frank?" he asked, in a hollow voice.

"I believe I'm a dead man," my lord said from the ground.

"No, no, not so," says the other; "and I call God to witness, Frank Esmond, that I would have asked your pardon, had you but given me a chance. In — in the first cause of our falling out, I swear that no one was to blame but me, and — and that my lady —"

"Hush!" says my poor Lord Viscount, lifting himself on his elbow, and speaking faintly. "'T was a dispute about the cards — the cursed cards. Harry, my boy, are you wounded, too? God help thee! I loved thee, Harry, and thou must watch over my little Frank — and — and carry this little heart to my wife."

And here my dear lord felt in his breast for a locket he wore there, and, in the act, fell back, fainting.

We were all at this terrified, thinking him dead; but Esmond and Colonel Westbury bade the chairmen to come into the field; and so my lord was carried to one Mr. Aimes, a surgeon, in Long Acre, who kept a bath, and there the house was wakened up, and the victim of this quarrel carried in.

My Lord Viscount was put to bed, and his wound looked to by the surgeon, who seemed both kind and skilful. When he had looked to my lord, he bandaged up Harry Esmond's hand (who, from loss of blood had fainted, too, in the house, and may have been some time unconscious); and when the young man came to himself, you may be sure he eagerly asked what news there were of his dear patron; on which the surgeon carried him to the room where the Lord Castlewood lay; who had already sent for a priest; and desired earnestly, they said, to speak with his kinsman. He was lying on a bed, very pale and ghastly, with that fixed, fatal look in his eyes, which betokens death; and faintly beckoning all the other persons away from him with his hand, and crying out "Only Harry Esmond," the hand fell powerless down on the coverlet, as Harry came forward, and knelt down and kissed it.

"Thou art all but a priest, Harry," my Lord Viscount gasped out, with a faint smile, and pressure of his cold hand. "Are they all gone? Let me make thee a death-bed confession."

And with sacred Death waiting, as it were, at the bed-foot, as an awful witness of his words, the poor

dying soul gasped out his last wishes in respect of his family; — his humble profession of contrition for his faults; — and his charity towards the world he was leaving. Some things, he said, concerned Harry Esmond as much as they astonished him. And my Lord Viscount sinking visibly, was in the midst of these strange confessions, when the ecclesiastic for whom my lord had sent, Mr. Atterbury, arrived.

This gentleman had reached to no great church dignity, as yet, but was only preacher at St. Bride's, drawing all the town thither by his eloquent sermons. He was godson to my lord, who had been pupil to his father; had paid a visit to Castlewood from Oxford more than once; and it was by his advice, I think, that Harry Esmond was sent to Cambridge, rather than to Oxford, of which place Mr. Atterbury, though a distinguished member, spoke but ill.

Our messenger found the good priest already at his books, at five o'clock in the morning, and he followed the man eagerly to the house where my poor Lord Viscount lay, — Esmond watching him, and taking his dying words from his mouth.

My lord, hearing of Mr. Atterbury's arrival, and squeezing Esmond's hand, asked to be alone with the priest; and Esmond left them there for this solemn interview. You may be sure that his own prayers and grief accompanied that dying benefactor. My lord had said to him that which confounded the young man — informed him of a secret which greatly concerned him. Indeed, after hearing it, he had had good cause for doubt and dismay; for mental anguish, as well as resolution. While the colloquy between Mr. Atterbury and

his dying penitent took place within, an immense contest of perplexity was agitating Lord Castlewood's young companion.

At the end of an hour — it may be more — Mr. Atterbury came out of the room, looking very hard at Esmond, and holding a paper.

"He is on the brink of God's awful judgment," the priest whispered. "He has made his breast clean to me. He forgives and believes, and makes restitution. Shall it be in public? Shall we call a witness to sign it?"

"God knows," sobbed out the young man; "my dearest lord has only done me kindness all his life."

The priest put the paper into Esmond's hand. He looked at it. It swam before his eyes.

"'T is a confession," he said.

"'T is as you please," said Mr. Atterbury.

There was a fire in the room, where the cloths were drying for the baths, and there lay a heap in a corner, saturated with the blood from my dear lord's body. Esmond went to the fire, and threw the paper into it. 'T was a great chimney with glazed Dutch tiles. How we remember such trifles in such awful moments! — the scrap of the book that we have read in a great grief — the taste of that last dish that we have eaten before a duel, or some such supreme meeting or parting. On the Dutch tiles at the Bagnio was a rude picture representing Jacob in hairy gloves, cheating Isaac of Esau's birthright. The burning paper lighted it up.

"'T is only a confession, Mr. Atterbury," said the young man. He leaned his head against the mantelpiece: a burst of tears came to his eyes. They were

the first he had shed as he sate by his lord, scared by this calamity and more yet by what the poor dying gentleman had told him, and shocked to think that he should be the agent of bringing this double misfortune on those he loved best.

"Let us go to him," said Mr. Esmond. And accordingly they went into the next chamber, where, by this time, the dawn had broke, which showed my lord's poor pale face and wild appealing eyes, that wore that awful fatal look of coming dissolution. The surgeon was with him. He went into the chamber as Atterbury came out thence. My Lord Viscount turned round his sick eyes towards Esmond. It choked the other to hear that rattle in his throat.

"My Lord Viscount," says Mr. Atterbury, "Mr. Esmond wants no witnesses, and hath burned the paper."

"My dearest Master!" Esmond said, kneeling down, and taking his hand and kissing it.

My Lord Viscount sprang up in his bed, and flung his arms round Esmond. "God bl—bless," . . . . was all he said. The blood rushed from his mouth, deluging the young man. My dearest lord was no more. He was gone with a blessing on his lips, and love and repentance and kindness in his manly heart.

"*Benedicti benedicentes*," says Mr. Atterbury, and the young man, kneeling at the bed-side, groaned out an amen.

"Who shall take the news to her?" was Mr. Esmond's next thought. And on this he besought Mr. Atterbury to bear the tidings to Castlewood. He could not face his mistress himself with those dreadful

news. Mr. Atterbury complying kindly, Esmond writ a hasty note on his table-book to my lord's man, bidding him get the horses for Mr. Atterbury, and ride with him, and send Esmond's own valise to the Gatehouse prison, whither he resolved to go and give himself up.

BOOK II.

CONTAINS MR. ESMOND'S MILITARY LIFE AND OTHER MATTERS APPERTAINING TO THE ESMOND FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

I am in prison, and visited, but not consoled there.

THOSE may imagine, who have seen Death untimely strike down persons revered and beloved, and know how unavailing consolation is, what was Harry Esmond's anguish after being an actor in that ghastly midnight scene of blood and homicide. He could not, he felt, have faced his dear mistress, and told her that story. He was thankful that kind Atterbury consented to break the sad news to her; but, besides his grief, which he took into prison with him, he had that in his heart which secretly cheered and consoled him.

A great secret had been told to Esmond by his unhappy stricken kinsman, lying on his death-bed. Were he to disclose it, as in equity and honour he might do, the discovery would but bring greater grief upon those whom he loved best in the world, and who were sad enough already. Should he bring down shame and perplexity upon all those beings to whom he was attached by so many tender ties of affection and gratitude? degrade his father's widow? impeach and sully his father's and kinsman's honour? and for what? for a barren title, to be worn at the expense of an innocent boy, the son of his dearest benefactress. He had debated this matter in his conscience, whilst his poor lord was making his dying confession. On one side were Ambition, Temptation, Justice, even;

but Love, Gratitude, and Fidelity, pleaded on the other. And when the struggle was over in Harry's mind, a glow of righteous happiness filled it; and it was with grateful tears in his eyes that he returned thanks to God for that decision which he had been enabled to make.

"When I was denied by my own blood," thought he, "these dearest friends received and cherished me. When I was a nameless orphan myself, and needed a protector, I found one in yonder kind soul, who has gone to his account repenting of the innocent wrong he has done."

And with this consoling thought he went away to give himself up at the prison, after kissing the cold lips of his benefactor.

It was on the third day after he had come to the Gatehouse prison, (where he lay in no small pain from his wound, which inflamed and ached severely;) and with those thoughts and resolutions that have been just spoke of, to depress, and yet to console him; that H. Esmond's keeper came and told him that a visitor was asking for him, and though he could not see her face, which was enveloped in a black hood, her whole figure, too, being veiled and covered with the deepest mourning, Esmond knew at once that his visitor was his dear mistress.

He got up from his bed, where he was lying, being very weak; and advancing towards her, as the retiring keeper shut the door upon him and his guest in that sad place, he put forward his left hand (for the right was wounded and bandaged), and he would have taken that kind one of his mistress, which had

done so many offices of friendship for him for so many years.

But the Lady Castlewood went back from him, putting back her hood, and leaning against the great stanchioned door which the gaoler had just closed upon them. Her face was ghastly white, as Esmond saw it, looking from the hood; and her eyes, ordinarily so sweet and tender, were fixed at him with such a tragic glance of woe and anger, as caused the young man, unaccustomed to unkindness from that person, to avert his own glances from her face.

"And this, Mr. Esmond," she said, "is where I see you; and 't is to this you have brought me!"

"You have come to console me in my calamity, Madam," said he (though, in truth, he scarce knew how to address her, his emotions, at beholding her, so overpowered him).

She advanced a little, but stood silent and trembling, looking out at him from her black draperies, with her small white hands clasped together, and quivering lips and hollow eyes.

"Not to reproach me," he continued, after a pause. "My grief is sufficient as it is."

"Take back your hand — do not touch me with it!" she cried. "Look! there 's blood on it!"

"I wish they had taken it all," said Esmond, "if you are unkind to me."

"Where is my husband?" she broke out. "Give me back my husband, Henry. Why did you stand by at midnight and see him murdered? Why did the traitor escape who did it? You, the champion of your house, who offered to die for us? You that he loved and trusted, and to whom I confided him —

you that vowed devotion and gratitude, and I believed you — yes I believed you — why are you here, and my noble Francis gone? Why did you come among us? You have only brought us grief and sorrow: and repentance, bitter, bitter repentance, as a return for our love and kindness. Did I ever do you a wrong, Henry? You were but an orphan child when I first saw you — when *he* first saw you, who was so good, and noble, and trusting. He would have had you sent away, but like a foolish woman, I besought him to let you stay. And you pretended to love us, and we believed you — and you made our house wretched, and my husband's heart went from me: and I lost him through you — I lost him — the husband of my youth, I say. I worshipped him: you know I worshipped him — and he was changed to me. He was no more my Francis of old — my dear, dear soldier. He loved me before he saw you: and I loved him; O, God is my witness how I loved him! Why did he not send you from among us? 'T was only his kindness that could refuse me nothing then. And, young as you were, — yes, and weak and alone — there was evil, I knew there was evil, in keeping you. I read it in your face and eyes. I saw that they boded harm to us — and it came, I knew it would. Why did you not die when you had the small-pox — and I came myself and watched you, and you didn't know me in your delirium — and you called out for me, though I was there at your side. All that has happened since, was a just judgment on my wicked heart — my wicked jealous heart. O, I am punished, awfully punished! My husband lies in his blood — murdered for defending me, my kind, kind, generous

lord — and you were by, and you let him die, Henry!"

These words, uttered in the wildness of her grief, by one who was ordinarily quiet, and spoke seldom except with a gentle smile and a soothing tone, rung in Esmond's ear; and 't is said that he repeated many of them in the fever into which he now fell from his wound, and perhaps from the emotion which such passionate undeserved upbraidings caused him. It seemed as if his very sacrifices and love for this lady and her family were to turn to evil and reproach: as if his presence amongst them was indeed a cause of grief, and the continuance of his life but woe and bitterness to theirs. As the Lady Castlewood spoke bitterly, rapidly, without a tear, he never offered a word of appeal or remonstrance; but sate at the foot of his prison-bed, stricken only with the more pain at thinking it was that soft and beloved hand which should stab him so cruelly, and powerless against her fatal sorrow. Her words as she spoke struck the chords of all his memory, and the whole of his boyhood and youth passed within him, whilst this lady, so fond and gentle but yesterday, — this good angel whom he had loved and worshipped, — stood before him, pursuing him with keen words and aspect malign.

"I wish I were in my lord's place," he groaned out. "It was not my fault that I was not there, Madam. But Fate is stronger than all of us, and willed what has come to pass. It had been better for me to have died when I had the illness."

"Yes, Henry," said she — and as she spoke she looked at him with a glance that was at once so fond and so sad, that the young man tossing up his arms

wildly fell back, hiding his head in the coverlet of the bed. As he turned he struck against the wall with his wounded hand, displacing the ligature; and he felt the blood rushing again from the wound. He remembered feeling a secret pleasure at the accident — and thinking "Suppose I were to end now, who would grieve for me?"

This hemorrhage, or the grief and despair in which the luckless young man was at the time of the accident, must have brought on a deliquium presently; for he had scarce any recollection afterwards, save of some one, his mistress probably, seizing his hand — and then of the buzzing noise in his ears as he awoke, with two or three persons of the prison around his bed, whereon he lay in a pool of blood from his arm.

It was now bandaged up again by the prison surgeon, who happened to be in the place: and the governor's wife and servant, kind people both, were with the patient. Esmond saw his mistress still in the room when he awoke from his trance: but she went away without a word; though the governor's wife told him that she sate in her room for some time afterward, and did not leave the prison until she heard that Esmond was likely to do well.

Days afterwards, when Esmond was brought out of a fever which he had, and which attacked him that night pretty sharply, the honest keeper's wife brought her patient a handkerchief fresh washed and ironed, and at the corner of which he recognised his mistress's well known cipher and viscountess's crown. "The lady had bound it round his arm when he fainted, and before she called for help," the keeper's wife said. "Poor lady; she took on sadly about her husband.

He has been buried to-day, and a many of the coaches of the nobility went with him, — my Lord Marlborough's and my Lord Sunderland's and many of the officers of the Guards, in which he served in the old King's time: and my lady has been with her two children to the King at Kensington, and asked for justice against my Lord Mohun, who is in hiding, and my lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland, who is ready to give himself up and take his trial."

Such were the news, coupled with assertions about her own hônesty and that of Molly her maid, who would never have stolen a certain trumpery gold sleeve-button of Mr. Esmond's that was missing after his fainting fit, that the keeper's wife brought to her lodger. His thoughts followed to that untimely grave, the brave heart, the kind friend, the gallant gentleman, honest of word and generous of thought (if feeble of purpose, but are his betters much stronger than he?) who had given him bread and shelter when he had none; home and love when he needed them; and who, if he had kept one vital secret from him, had done that of which he repented ere dying, — a wrong indeed, but one followed by remorse, and occasioned by almost irresistible temptation.

Esmond took his handkerchief when his nurse left him, and very likely kissed it, and looked at the bauble embroidered in the corner. "It has cost thee grief enough," he thought, "dear lady, so loving and so tender. Shall I take it from thee and thy children? No, never! Keep it, and wear it, my little Frank, my pretty boy. If I cannot make a name for myself, I can die without one. Some day, when my dear mistress sees my heart, I shall be righted; or if not here or

now, why, elsewhere: where Honour doth not follow us, but where Love reigns perpetual."

'T is needless to narrate here, as the reports of the lawyers already have chronicled them, the particulars or issue of that trial which ensued upon my Lord Castlewood's melancholy homicide. Of the two lords engaged in that sad matter, the second, my lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland, who had been engaged with Colonel Westbury, and wounded by him, was found not guilty by his peers, before whom he was tried (under the presidence of the Lord Steward, Lord Somers); and the principal, the Lord Mohun, being found guilty of the manslaughter, (which, indeed, was forced upon him, and of which he repented most sincerely,) pleaded his clergy; and so was discharged without any penalty. The widow of the slain nobleman, as it was told us in prison, showed an extraordinary spirit; and though she had to wait for ten years before her son was old enough to compass it, declared she would have revenge of her husband's murderer. So much and suddenly had grief, anger, and misfortune appeared to change her. But fortune, good or ill, as I take it, does not change men and women. It but develops their characters. As there are a thousand thoughts lying within a man that he does not know till he takes up the pen to write, so the heart is a secret even to him (or her) who has it in his own breast. Who hath not found himself surprised into revenge, or action, or passion, for good or evil; whereof the seeds lay within him, latent and unsuspected until the occasion called them forth? With the death of her lord, a change seemed to come over the whole conduct and mind of Lady Castlewood,

but of this we shall speak in the right season and anon.

The lords being tried then before their peers at Westminster, according to their privilege, being brought from the Tower with state processions and barges, and accompanied by lieutenants and axemen, the commoners engaged in that melancholy fray took their trial at Newgate, as became them; and, being all found guilty, pleaded likewise their benefit of clergy. The sentence, as we all know, in these cases is, that the culprit lies a year in prison, or during the King's pleasure, and is burned in the hand, or only stamped with a cold iron; or this part of the punishment is altogether remitted at the grace of the Sovereign. So Harry Esmond found himself a criminal and a prisoner at two-and-twenty years old; as for the two colonels, his comrades, they took the matter very lightly. Duelling was a part of their business; and they could not in honour refuse any invitations of that sort.

But the case was different with Mr. Esmond. His life was changed by that stroke of the sword which destroyed his kind patron's. As he lay in prison old Dr. Tusher fell ill and died; and Lady Castlewood appointed Thomas Tusher to the vacant living; about the filling of which she had a thousand times fondly talked to Harry Esmond: how they never should part; how he should educate her boy; how to be a country clergyman, like saintly George Herbert or pious Dr. Ken, was the happiness and greatest lot in life; how (if he were obstinately bent on it, though, for her part, she owned rather to holding Queen Bess's opinion, that a bishop should have no wife, and if not a bishop, why a clergyman?) she would find a good

wife for Harry Esmond: and so on, with a hundred pretty prospects told by fireside evenings, in fond prattle, as the children played about the hall. All these plans were overthrown now. Thomas Tusher wrote to Esmond, as he lay in prison, announcing that his patroness had conferred upon him the living his reverend father had held for many years; that she never, after the tragical events which had occurred (whereof Tom spoke with a very edifying horror), could see in the revered Tusher's pulpit, or at her son's table, the man who was answerable for the father's life; that her ladyship bade him to say that she prayed for her kinsman's repentance and his worldly happiness; that he was free to command her aid for any scheme of life which he might propose to himself; but that on this side of the grave she would see him no more. And Tusher, for his own part, added that Harry should have his prayers as a friend of his youth, and commended him whilst he was in prison to read certain works of theology, which his Reverence pronounced to be very wholesome for sinners in his lamentable condition.

And this was the return for a life of devotion — this the end of years of affectionate intercourse and passionate fidelity! Harry would have died for his patron, and was held as little better than his murderer: he had sacrificed, she did not know how much, for his mistress, and she threw him aside — he had endowed her family with all they had, and she talked about giving him alms as to a menial! The grief for his patron's loss: the pains of his own present position, and doubts as to the future: all these were forgotten under the sense of the consummate outrage

which he had to endure, and overpowered by the superior pang of that torture.

He writ back a letter to Mr. Tusher from his prison, congratulating his Reverence upon his appointment to the living of Castlewood: sarcastically bidding him to follow in the footsteps of his admirable father, whose gown had descended upon him — thanking her ladyship for her offer of alms, which he said he should trust not to need; and beseeching her to remember that if ever her determination should change towards him, he would be ready to give her proofs of a fidelity which had never wavered and which ought never to have been questioned by that house. "And if we meet no more, or only as strangers in this world," Mr. Esmond concluded, "a sentence against the cruelty and injustice of which I disdain to appeal; hereafter she will know who was faithful to hér, and whether she had any cause to suspect the love and devotion of her kinsman and servant."

After the sending of this letter, the poor young fellow's mind was more at ease than it had been previously. The blow had been struck, and he had borne it. His cruel Goddess had shaken her wings and fled: and left him alone and friendless, but *virtute suâ*. And he had to bear him up, at once the sense of his right, and the feeling of his wrongs, his honour and his misfortune. As I have seen men waking and running to arms, at a sudden trumpet; before emergency a manly heart leaps up resolute; meets the threatening danger with undaunted countenance; and whether conquered or conquering faces it always. Ah! no man knows his strength or his weakness, till occasion proves them. If there be some thoughts and

actions of his life from the memory of which a man shrinks with shame, sure there are some which he may be proud to own and remember; forgiven injuries, conquered temptations (now and then) and difficulties vanquished by endurance.

It was these thoughts regarding the living, far more than any great poignancy of grief respecting the dead, which affected Harry Esmond whilst in prison after his trial: but it may be imagined that he could take no comrade of misfortune into the confidence of his feelings, and they thought it was remorse and sorrow for his patron's loss which affected the young man, in error of which opinion he chose to leave them. As a companion he was so moody and silent that the two officers, his fellow sufferers, left him to himself mostly, liked little very likely what they knew of him, consoled themselves with dice, cards, and the bottle, and whiled away their own captivity in their own way. It seemed to Esmond as if he lived years in that prison: and was changed and aged when he came out of it. At certain periods of life we live years of emotion in a few weeks — and look back on those times, as on great gaps between the old life and the new. You do not know how much you suffer in those critical maladies of the heart, until the disease is over and you look back on it afterwards. During the time the suffering is at least sufferable. The day passes in more or less of pain, and the night wears away somehow. 'T is only in after days that we see what the danger has been — as a man out a-hunting or riding for his life looks at a leap, and wonders how he should have survived the taking of it. O, dark

months of grief and rage! of wrong and cruel endurance! He is old now who recalls you. Long ago he has forgiven and blest the soft hand that wounded him: but the mark is there, and the wound is cicatrized only — no time, tears, caresses, or repentance, can obliterate the scar. We are indocile to put up with grief, however. *Reficimus rates quassas:* we tempt the ocean again and again, and try upon new ventures. Esmond thought of his early time as a noviciate, and of this past trial as an initiation before entering into life, — as our young Indians undergo tortures silently before they pass to the rank of warriors in the tribe.

The officers, meanwhile, who were not let into the secret of the grief which was gnawing at the side of their silent young friend, and being accustomed to such transactions in which one comrade or another was daily paying the forfeit of the sword, did not of course bemoan themselves very inconsolably about the fate of their late companion in arms. This one told stories of former adventures of love, or war, or pleasure in which poor Frank Esmond had been engaged; t'other recollected how a constable had been bilked, or a tavern-bully beaten: whilst my lord's poor widow was sitting at his tomb worshipping him as an actual saint and spotless hero, — so the visitors said who had news of Lady Castlewood; and Westbury and Macartney had pretty nearly had all the town to come and see them.

The duel, its fatal termination, the trial of the two peers and the three commoners concerned, had caused the greatest excitement in the town. The prints and News Letters were full of them. The three gentlemen in Newgate were almost as much crowded as the

bishops in the Tower, or a highwayman before execution. We were allowed to live in the Governor's house, as hath been said, both before trial and after condemnation, waiting the King's pleasure; nor was the real cause of the fatal quarrel known, so closely had my lord and the two other persons who knew it kept the secret, but every one imagined that the origin of the meeting was a gambling dispute. Except fresh air, the prisoners had, upon payment, most things they could desire. Interest was made that they should not mix with the vulgar convicts, whose rioald choruses and loud laughter and curses could be heard from their own part of the prison, where they and the miserable debtors were confined pell-mell.

CHAPTER II.

I come to the end of my captivity, but not of my trouble.

Among the company which came to visit the two officers was an old acquaintance of Harry Esmond, that gentleman of the Guards — namely, who had been so kind to Harry when Captain Westbury's troop had been quartered at Castlewood more than seven years before. Dick the Scholar was no longer Dick the Trooper now, but Captain Steele, of Lucas's Fusileer's, and secretary to my Lord Cutts, that famous officer of King William's, the bravest and most beloved man of the English army. The two jolly prisoners had been drinking with a party of friends (for our cellar and that of the keepers of Newgate too, were supplied with endless hampers of Burgundy and Champagne that the friends of the Colonels sent in); and Harry, having no wish for their drink, or their conversation, being too feeble in health for the one, and too sad in spirits for the other, was sitting apart in his little room, reading such books as he had, one evening, when honest Colonel Westbury, flushed with liquor, and always good-humoured in and out of his cups, came laughing into Harry's closet, and said "Ho, young Killjoy! here 's a friend come to see thee; he 'll pray with thee, or he 'll drink with thee; or he 'll drink and pray turn about. Dick, my Christian Hero, here 's the little scholar of Castlewood."

Dick came up and kissed Esmond on both cheeks,

imparting a strong perfume of burnt sack along with his caress to the young man.

"What! is this the little man that used to talk Latin and fetch our bowls? How tall thou art grown! I protest I should have known thee anywhere. And so you have turned ruffian and fighter; and wanted to measure swords with Mohun, did you? I protest that Mohun said at the Guard dinner yesterday, where there was a pretty company of us, that the young fellow wanted to fight him, and was the better man of the two."

"I wish we could have tried and proved it, Mr. Steele," says Esmond, thinking of his dead benefactor, and his eyes filling with tears.

With the exception of that one cruel letter which he had from his mistress, Mr. Esmond heard nothing from her, and she seemed determined to execute her resolve of parting from him and disowning him. But he had news of her, such as it was, which Mr. Steele assiduously brought him from the Prince's and Princesses' Court, where our honest captain had been advanced to the post of gentleman waiter. When off duty there, Captain Dick often came to console his friends in captivity; a good nature and a friendly disposition towards all who were in ill-fortune no doubt prompting him to make his visits, and good fellowship and good wine to prolong them.

"Faith," says Westbury, "the little scholar was the first to begin the quarrel — I mind me of it now — at Lockit's. I always hated that fellow Mohun. What was the real cause of the quarrel betwixt him and poor Frank? I would wager 't was a woman."

"'T was a quarrel about play — on my word,

about play," Harry said. "My poor lord lost great sums to his guest at Castlewood. Angry words passed between them; and though Lord Castlewood was the kindest and most pliable soul alive, his spirit was very high; and hence that meeting which has brought us all here," says Mr. Esmond, resolved never to acknowledge that there had ever been any other but cards for the duel.

"I do not like to use bad words of a nobleman," says Westbury. "But if my Lord Mohun were a commoner, I would say, 't was a pity he was not hanged. He was familiar with dice and women, at a time other boys are at school, being birched; he was as wicked as the oldest rake, years ere he had done growing; and handled a sword, and a foil, and a bloody one, too, before ever he used a razor. He held poor Will Mountford in talk that night, when bloody Dick Hill ran him through. He will come to a bad end, will that young lord; and no end is bad enough for him," says honest Mr. Westbury: whose prophesy was fulfilled twelve years after, upon that fatal day, when Mohun fell, dragging down one of the bravest and greatest gentlemen in England in his fall.

From Mr. Steele, then, who brought the public rumour, as well as his own private intelligence, Esmond learned the movements of his unfortunate mistress. Steele's heart was of very inflammable composition; and the gentleman usher spoke in terms of boundless admiration both of the widow (that most beautiful woman, as he said), and of her daughter, who, in the Captain's eyes, was a still greater paragon. If the pale widow, whom Captain Richard, in his poetic rapture, compared to a Niobe in tears, —

to a Sigismunda, — to a weeping Belvidera, was an object the most lovely and pathetic which his eyes had ever beheld, or for which his heart had melted, even her ripened perfections and beauty were as nothing, compared to the promise of that extreme loveliness which the good captain saw in her daughter. It was *matre pulcra filia pulcrior.* Steele composed sonnets whilst he was on duty in his Prince's antechamber, to the maternal and filial charms. He would speak for hours about them to Harry Esmond; and, indeed, he could have chosen few subjects more likely to interest the unhappy young man, whose heart was now as always devoted to these ladies; and who was thankful to all who loved them, or praised them, or wished them well.

Not that his fidelity was recompensed by any answering kindness, or show of relenting even, on the part of a mistress obdurate now after ten years of love and benefactions. The poor young man getting no answer, save Tusher's, to that letter which he had written, and being too proud to write more, opened a part of his heart to Steele, than whom no man, when unhappy, could find a kinder hearer or more friendly emissary, described (in words which were no doubt pathetic, for they came *imo pectore,* and caused honest Dick to weep plentifully) his youth, his constancy, his fond devotion to that household which had reared him; his affection, how earned, and how tenderly requited until but yesterday, and (as far as he might) the circumstances and causes for which that sad quarrel had made of Esmond a prisoner under sentence, a widow and orphans of those whom in life he held dearest. In terms that might well move a

harder-hearted man than young Esmond's confidant; for, indeed, the speaker's own heart was half broke as he uttered them; he described a part of what had taken place in that only sad interview which his mistress had granted him; how she had left him with anger and almost imprecation, whose words and thoughts until then had been only blessing and kindness; how she had accused him of the guilt of that blood, in exchange for which he would cheerfully have sacrificed his own (indeed, in this the Lord Mohun, the Lord Warwick and all the gentlemen engaged, as well as the common rumour out of doors — Steele told him — bore out the luckless young man); and with all his heart, and tears, he besought Mr. Steele to inform his mistress of her kinsman's unhappiness, and to deprecate that cruel anger she showed him. Half frantic with grief at the injustice done him, and contrasting it with a thousand soft recollections of love and confidence gone by, that made his present misery inexpressibly more bitter, the poor wretch passed many a lonely day and wakeful night in a kind of powerless despair and rage against his iniquitous fortune. It was the softest hand that struck him, the gentlest and most compassionate nature that persecuted him. "I would as lief," he said, "have pleaded guilty to the murder, and have suffered for it like any other felon, as have to endure the torture to which my mistress subjects me."

Although the recital of Esmond's story, and his passionate appeals and remonstrances drew so many tears from Dick who heard them, they had no effect upon the person whom they were designed to move. Esmond's ambassador came back from the mission

with which the poor young gentleman had charged him, with a sad blank face and a shake of the head which told that there was no hope for the prisoner; and scarce a wretched culprit in that prison of Newgate ordered for execution, and trembling for a reprieve, felt more cast down than Mr. Esmond, innocent and condemned.

As had been arranged between the prisoner and his council in their consultations, Mr. Steele had gone to the dowager's house in Chelsea, where it has been said the widow and her orphans were, 'had seen my Lady Viscountess and pleaded the cause of her unfortunate kinsman. "And I think I spoke well, my poor boy," says Mr. Steele; "for who would not speak well in such a cause, and before so beautiful a judge. I did not see the lovely Beatrix (sure her famous namesake of Florence was never half so beautiful), only the young viscount was in the room with the Lord Churchill, my Lord of Marlborough's eldest son. But these young gentlemen went off to the garden, I could see them from the window tilting at each other with poles in a mimic tournament (grief touches the young but lightly, and I remember that I beat a drum at the coffin of my own father). My Lady Viscountess looked out at the two boys at their game, and said — 'You see, Sir, children are taught to use weapons of death as toys, and to make a sport of murder,' and as she spoke she looked so lovely, and stood there in herself so sad and beautiful an instance of that doctrine whereof I am a humble preacher, that had I not dedicated my little volume of the Christian Hero — (I perceive Harry thou hast not cut the leaves of it. The sermon is good, believe me, though the preacher's

life may not answer it) — I say, hadn't I dedicated the volume to Lord Cutts, I would have asked permission to place her ladyship's name on the first page. I think I never saw such a beautiful violet as that of her eyes, Harry. Her complexion is of the pink of the blushrose, she hath an exquisite turned wrist and dimpled hand, and I make no doubt ——"

"Did you come to tell me about the dimples on my lady's hand?" broke out Mr. Esmond, sadly.

"A lovely creature in affliction seems always doubly beautiful to me," says the poor captain, who indeed was but too often in a state to see double, and so checked he resumed the interrupted thread of his story. "As I spoke my business," Mr. Steele said, "and narrated to your mistress what all the world knows, and the other side hath been eager to acknowledge — that you had tried to put yourself between the two lords, and to take your patron's quarrel on your own point: I recounted the general praises of your gallantry, besides my Lord Mohun's particular testimony to it: I thought the widow listened with some interest, and her eyes — I have never seen such a violet, Harry — looked up at mine once or twice. But after I had spoken on this theme for a while she suddenly broke away with a cry of grief. 'I would to God, Sir,' she said, 'I had never heard that word gallantry which you use, or known the meaning of it. My lord might have been here but for that; my home might be happy; my poor boy have a father. It was what you gentlemen call gallantry came into my home, and drove my husband on to the cruel sword that killed him. You should not speak the word to a Christian woman, Sir — a poor widowed mother of

orphans, whose home was happy until the world came into it — the wicked godless world, that takes the blood of the innocent and lets the guilty go free.'

"As the afflicted lady spoke in this strain, Sir," Mr. Steele continued, "it seemed as if indignation moved her, even more than grief. 'Compensation!' she went on passionately, her cheeks and eyes kindling, 'what compensation does your world give the widow for her husband, and the children for the murderer of their father? The wretch who did the deed has not even a punishment. Conscience! what conscience has he, who can enter the house of a friend, whisper falsehood and insult to a woman that never harmed him, and stab the kind heart that trusted him? My Lord — my Lord Wretch, my Lord Villain's, my Lord Murderer's peers meet to try him, and they dismiss him with a word or two of reproof, and send him into the world again, to pursue women with lust and falsehood, and to murder unsuspecting hosts that harbour him. That day, my Lord — my Lord Murderer — (I will never name him) — was let loose, a woman was executed at Tyburn for stealing in a shop. But a man may rob another of his life, or a lady of her honour, and shall pay no penalty! I take my child, run to the throne, and, on my knees, ask for justice, and the King refuses me. The King! he is no king of mine — he never shall be. He, too, robbed the throne from the king his father — the true king — and he has gone unpunished, as the great do.'

"I then thought to speak for you," Mr. Steele continued, "and I interposed by saying, 'There was one, Madam, who, at least, would have put his own breast between your husband's and my Lord Mohun's

sword. Your poor young kinsman, Harry Esmond, hath told me that he tried to draw the quarrel on himself.'

"'Are you come from *him?*' asked the lady (so Mr. Steele went on) rising up with a great severity and stateliness. 'I thought you had come from the Princess. I saw Mr. Esmond in his prison, and bade him farewell. He brought misery into my house. He never should have entered it.'

"'Madam, Madam, he is not to blame,' I interposed," continued Mr. Steele.

"'Do I blame him to you, Sir?' asked the widow. 'If 't is he who sent you, say that I have taken counsel, where' — she spoke with a very pallid cheek now, and a break in her voice — 'where all who ask may have it; — and that it bids me to part from him, and to see him no more. We met in the prison for the last time — at least for years to come. It may be, in years hence, when — when our knees and our tears and our contrition have changed our sinful hearts, Sir, and wrought our pardon, we may meet again — but not now. After what has passed, I could not bear to see him. I wish him well, Sir: but I wish him farewell, too; and if he has that — that regard towards us, which he speaks of, I beseech him to prove it by obeying me in this.'

"'I shall break the young man's heart, Madam, by this hard sentence,' Mr. Steele said.

"The lady shook her head," continued my kind scholar. "'The hearts of young men, Mr. Steele, are not so made,' she said. 'Mr. Esmond will find other — other friends. The mistress of this house has relented very much towards the late lord's son,' she

added, with a blush, 'and has promised me, that is, has promised that she will care for his fortune. Whilst I live in it, after the horrid deed which has passed, Castlewood must never be a home to him — never. Nor would I have him write to me — except — no — I would have him never write to me, nor see him more. Give him, if you will, my parting — Hush! not a word of this before my daughter.'

"Here the fair Beatrix entered from the river, with her cheeks flushing with health, and looking only the more lovely and fresh for the mourning habiliments which she wore. And my Lady Viscountess said:

"'Beatrix, this is Mr. Steele, gentleman usher to the Prince's Highness. When does your new comedy appear, Mr. Steele?' I hope thou wilt be out of prison for the first night, Harry."

The sentimental captain concluded his sad tale, saying, "Faith, the beauty of *Filia pulcrior* drove *pulcram matrem* out of my head; and yet, as I came down the river, and thought about the pair, the pallid dignity and exquisite grace of the matron had the uppermost, and I thought her even more noble than the virgin!"

The party of prisoners lived very well in Newgate, and with comforts very different to those which were awarded to the poor wretches there (his insensibility to their misery, their gaiety still more frightful, their curses and blasphemy, hath struck with a kind of shame since — as proving how selfish during his imprisonment, his own particular grief was, and how entirely the thoughts of it absorbed him): if the three gentlemen lived well under the care of the Warden

of Newgate, it was because they paid well: and indeed the cost at the dearest ordinary or the grandest tavern in London could not have furnished a longer reckoning, than our host of the Handcuff Inn — as Colonel Westbury called it. Our rooms were the three in the gate over Newgate — on the second story looking up Newgate Street towards Cheapside and Paul's Church. And we had leave to walk on the roof, and could see thence Smithfield and the Bluecoat Boys' School, Gardens, and the Chartreux, where, as Harry Esmond remembered; Dick the Scholar, and his friend Tom Tusher, had had their schooling.

Harry could never have paid his share of that prodigious heavy reckoning which my landlord brought to his guests once a week: for he had but three pieces in his pockets that fatal night before the duel, when the gentlemen were at cards, and offered to play five. But whilst he was yet ill at the Gatehouse, after Lady Castlewood had visited him there, and before his trial, there came one in an orange-tawny coat and blue lace, the livery which the Esmonds always wore, and brought a sealed packet for Mr. Esmond, which contained twenty guineas, and a note saying that a counsel had been appointed for him, and that more money would be forthcoming whenever he needed it.

'T was a queer letter from the scholar as she was, or as she called herself: the Dowager Viscountess Castlewood, written in the strange barbarous French, which she and many other fine ladies of that time — witness Her Grace of Portsmouth — employed. Indeed, spelling was not an article of general commodity in the world then, and my Lord Marlborough's letters

can show that he, for one, had but a little share of this part of grammar.

"Mong Coussin," my Lady Viscountess Dowager wrote, "je scay que vous vous etes bravement batew et grievement bléssay — du costé de feu M. le Vicomte. M. le Compte de Varique ne se playt qua parlay de vous: M. de Moon auçy. Il di que vous avay voulew vous bastre avecque luy — que vous estes plus fort que luy sur l'ayscrimme — quil'y a surtout certaine Botte que vous scavay quil n' a jammay sceu pariay: et que c'en eut été fay de luy si vouseluy vous vous fussiay battews ansamb. Ainey ce pauv Vicompte est mort. Mort et peutayt — Mon coussin, mon coussin! jay dans la tayste que vous n'estes quung pety Monst — angcy que les Esmonds ong tousjours esté. La veuve est chay moy. J'ay recuilly cet' pauve famme. Elle est furieuse cont vous, allans tous les jours chercher le Roy (d'icy) démandant à gran cri revanche pour son Mary. Ell ene veux voyre ni entende parlay de vous: pourtant elle ne fay qu'en parlay milfoy par jour. Quand vous seray hor prison venay me voyre. J'auray soing de vous. Si cette petite Prude veut se défaire de song pety Monste (Hélas je craing qùil ne soy trotar!) je m'en chargeray. J'ay encor quelqu interay et quelques escus de costay.

"La Veuve se raccommode avec Miladi Marlboro qui est tout puiçante avecque la Reine Anne. Cet dam sentéraysent pour la petite prude; qui pourctant a un fi du mesme asge que vous savay.

"En sortant de prisong venez icy. Je ne puy vous recevoir chaymoy a cause des méchansetés du monde, may pre du moy vous aurez logement.

"ISABELLE VICOMPTESSE D'ESMOND."

Marchioness of Esmond this lady sometimes called herself, in virtue of that patent which had been given by the late King James to Harry Esmond's father; and in this state she had her train carried by a knight's wife, a cup and cover of assay to drink from, and fringed cloth.

He who was of the same age as little Francis, whom we shall henceforth call Viscount Castlewood here, was H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, born in the same year and month with Frank, and just proclaimed at Saint Germains, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland.

CHAPTER III.

I take the Queen's pay in Quin's Regiment.

THE fellow in the orange-tawny livery with blue lace and facings was in waiting when Esmond came out of prison, and taking the young gentleman's slender baggage, led the way out of that odious Newgate, and by Fleet Conduit, down to the Thames, where a pair of oars was called, and they went up the river to Chelsea. Esmond thought the sun had never shone so bright; nor the air felt so fresh and exhilarating. Temple Garden, as they rowed by, looked like the garden of Eden to him, and the aspect of the quays, wharves, and buildings by the river, Somerset House, and Westminster (where the splendid new bridge was just beginning), Lambeth tower and palace, and that busy shining scene of the Thames swarming with boats and barges, filled his heart with pleasure and cheerfulness — as well such a beautiful scene might to one who had been a prisoner so long, and with so many dark thoughts deepening the gloom of his captivity. They rowed up at length to the pretty village of Chelsea, where the nobility have many handsome country-houses; and so came to my Lady Viscountess's house; a cheerful new house in the row facing the river, with a handsome garden behind it, and a pleasant look-out both towards Surrey and Kensington, where stands the noble ancient palace of the Lord Warwick, Harry's reconciled adversary.

Here in her ladyship's saloon, the young man saw again some of those pictures which had been at Castlewood, and which she had removed thence on the death of her lord, Harry's father. Specially, and in the place of honour, was Sir Peter Lely's picture of the Honourable Mistress Isabella Esmond as Diana, in yellow satin, with a bow in her hand and a crescent in her forehead; and dogs frisking about her. 'T was painted about the time when royal Endymions were said to find favour with this virgin huntress; and as goddesses have youth perpetual, this one believed to the day of her death that she never grew older: and always persisted in supposing the picture was still like her.

After he had been shown to her room by the groom of the chamber, who filled many offices besides in her ladyship's modest household; and after a proper interval, this elderly goddess Diana vouchsafed to appear to the young man. A blackamoor in a Turkish habit, with red boots and a silver collar on which the Viscountess's arms were engraven, preceded her and bore her cushion; then came her gentlewoman; a little pack of spaniels barking and frisking about preceded the austere huntress — then, behold, the Viscountess herself "dropping odours." Esmond recollected from his childhood that rich aroma of musk which his mother-in-law (for she may be called so) exhaled. As the sky grows redder and redder towards sunset, so, in the decline of her years, the cheeks of my Lady Dowager blushed more deeply. Her face was illuminated with vermilion, which appeared the brighter from the white paint employed to set it off. She wore the ringlets which had been in fashion in King Charles's time;

whereas the ladies of King William's had head-dresses like the towers of Cybele. Her eyes gleamed out from the midst of this queer structure of paint, dyes, and pomatums. Such was my Lady Viscountess, Mr. Esmond's father's widow.

He made her such a profound bow as her dignity and relationship merited: and advanced with the greatest gravity and once more kissed that hand upon the trembling knuckles of which glittered a score of rings — remembering old times when that trembling hand made him tremble. "Marchioness," says he, bowing, and on one knee, "is it only the hand I may have the honour of saluting?" For, accompanying that inward laughter, which the sight of such an astonishing old figure might well produce in the young man, there was good-will too, and the kindness of consanguinity. She had been his father's wife, and was his grandfather's daughter. She had suffered him in old days, and was kind to him now after her fashion. And now that bar-sinister was removed from Esmond's thoughts; and that secret opprobrium no longer cast upon his mind; he was pleased to feel family ties and own them — perhaps secretly vain of the sacrifice he had made, and to think that he, Esmond, was really the chief of his house, and only prevented by his own magnanimity from advancing his claim.

At least, ever since he had learned that secret from his poor patron on his dying bed, actually as he was standing beside it, he had felt an independency which he had never known before, and which since did not desert him. So he called his old aunt, Marchioness, but with an air as if he was the Marquis of Esmond who so addressed her.

Did she read in the young gentleman's eyes, which had now no fear of hers or their superannuated authority, that he knew or suspected the truth about his birth? She gave a start of surprise at his altered manner, indeed, it was quite a different bearing to that of the Cambridge student who had paid her a visit two years since, and whom she had dismissed with five pieces sent by the groom of the chamber. She eyed him, then trembled a little more than was her wont, perhaps, and said. "Welcome, cousin," in a frightened voice.

His resolution, as has been said before, had been quite different, namely, so to bear himself through life as if the secret of his birth was not known to him; but he suddenly and rightly determined on a different course. He asked that her ladyship's attendants should be dismissed, and when they were private — "Welcome, nephew, at least, Madam, it should be," he said. "A great wrong has been done to me and to you, and to my poor mother, who is no more."

"I declare before Heaven that I was guiltless of it," she cried out, giving up her cause at once. "It was your wicked father who — "

"Who brought this dishonour on our family," says Mr. Esmond. "I know it full well. I want to disturb no one. Those who are in present possession have been my dearest benefactors, and are quite innocent of intentional wrong to me. The late lord, my dear patron, knew not the truth until a few months before his death, when Father Holt brought the news to him."

"The wretch! he had it in confession! He had it in confession!" cried out the dowager lady.

"Not so. He learned it elsewhere as well as in confession," Mr. Esmond answered. "My father, when wounded at the Boyne, told the truth to a French priest, who was in hiding after the battle, as well as to the priest there, at whose house he died. This gentleman did not think fit to divulge the story till he met with Mr. Holt at Saint Omer's. And the latter kept it back for his own purpose, and until he had learned whether my mother was alive or no. She is dead years since: my poor patron told me with his dying breath; and I doubt him not. I do not know even whether I could prove a marriage. I would not if I could. I do not care to bring shame on our name, or grief upon those whom I love, however hardly they may use me. My father's son, Madam, won't aggravate the wrong my father did you. Continue to be his widow, and give me your kindness. 'T is all I ask from you; and I shall never speak of this matter again."

"Mais vous êtes un noble jeune homme!" breaks out my lady, speaking, as usual with her when she was agitated, in the French language.

"*Noblesse oblige*," says Mr. Esmond, making her a low bow. "There are those alive to whom, in return for their love to me, I often fondly said I would give my life away. Shall I be their enemy now, and quarrel about a title? What matters who has it? 'T is with the family still."

"What can there be in that little prude of a woman, that makes men so *raffoler* about her?" cries out my Lady Dowager. "She was here for a month petitioning the King. She is pretty, and well conserved; but she has not the *bel air*. In his late Majesty's court

all the men pretended to admire her; and she was no better than a little wax doll. She is better now, and looks the sister of her daughter: but what mean you all by bepraising her? Mr. Steele, who was in waiting on Prince George, seeing her with her two children going to Kensington, writ a poem about her; and says he shall wear her colours, and dress in black for the future. Mr. Congreve says he will write a Mourning Widow, that shall be better than his Mourning Bride. Though their husbands quarrelled and fought when that wretch Churchill deserted the King (for which he deserved to be hung), Lady Marlborough has again gone wild about the little widow; insulted me in my own drawing-room, by saying that 't was not the *old* widow, but the young viscountess, she had come to see. Little Castlewood and little Lord Churchill are to be sworn friends, and have boxed each other twice or thrice like brothers already. 'T was that wicked young Mohun who, coming back from the provinces last year, where he had disinterred her, raved about her all the winter; said she was a pearl set before swine; and killed poor stupid Frank. The quarrel was all about his wife. I know 't was all about her. Was there anything between her and Mohun, nephew? Tell me now; was there anything? About yourself, I do not ask you to answer questions." Mr. Esmond blushed up. "My lady's virtue is like that of a saint in Heaven, Madam," he cried out.

"Eh! — mon neveu. Many saints get to Heaven after having a deal to repent of. I believe you are like all the rest of the fools, and madly in love with her."

"Indeed, I loved and honoured her before all the

world," Esmond answered. "I take no shame in that."

"And she has shut her door on you — given the living to that horrid young cub, son of that horrid old bear, Tusher, and says she will never see you more. Monsieur mon neveu — we are all like that. When I was a young woman, I 'm positive that a thousand duels were fought about me. And when poor Monsieur de Souchy drowned himself in the canal at Bruges, because I danced with Count Springbock, I couldn't squeeze out a single tear, but danced till five o'clock the next morning. 'T was the Count — no, 't was my Lord Ormond that payed the fiddles, and His Majesty did me the honour of dancing all night with me. — How you are grown! You have got the *bel air*. You are a black man. Our Esmonds are all black. The little prude's son is fair; so was his father — fair and stupid. You were an ugly little wretch, when you came to Castlewood — you were all eyes, like a young crow. We intended you should be a priest. That awful Father Holt — how he used to frighten me when I was ill! I have a comfortable director now — the Abbé Douillette — a dear man. We make meagre on Fridays always. My cook is a devout, pious man. You, of course, are of the right way of thinking. They say the Prince of Orange is very ill indeed."

In this way the old dowager rattled on remorselessly to Mr. Esmond, who was quite astounded with her present volubility, contrasting it with her former haughty behaviour to him. But she had taken him into favour for the moment, and chose not only to like him, as far as her nature permitted, but to be afraid

of him: and he found himself to be as familiar with her now as a young man, as, when a boy, he had been timorous and silent. She was as good as her word respecting him. She introduced him to her company, of which she entertained a good deal — of the adherents of King James, of course — and a great deal of loud intriguing took place over her card-tables. She presented Mr. Esmond as her kinsman to many persons of honour; she supplied him not illiberally with money, which he had no scruple in accepting from her, considering the relationship which he bore to her, and the sacrifices which he himself was making in behalf of the family. But he had made up his mind to continue at no woman's apron-strings longer; and perhaps had cast about how he should distinguish himself, and make himself a name, which his singular fortune had denied him. A discontent with his former bookish life and quietude, — a bitter feeling of revolt at that slavery in which he had chosen to confine himself for the sake of those whose hardness towards him made his heart bleed, — a restless wish to see men and the world, — led him to think of the military profession: at any rate, to desire to see a few campaigns, and accordingly he pressed his new patroness to get him a pair of colours; and one day had the honour of finding himself appointed an ensign in Colonel Quin's regiment of Fusiliers on the Irish establishment.

Mr. Esmond's commission was scarce three weeks old when that accident befell King William which ended the life of the greatest, the wisest, the bravest, and most clement sovereign whom England ever knew. 'T was the fashion of the hostile party to assail this great prince's reputation during his life; but the joy

which they and all his enemies in Europe showed at his death, is a proof of the terror in which they held him. Young as Esmond was, he was wise enough (and generous enough, too, let it be said,) to scorn that indecency of gratulation which broke out amongst the followers of King James in London, upon the death of this illustrious prince, this invincible warrior, this wise and moderate statesman. Loyalty to the exiled king's family was traditional, as has been said, in that house to which Mr. Esmond belonged. His father's widow had all her hopes, sympathies, recollections, prejudices, engaged on King James's side; and was certainly as noisy a conspirator as ever asserted the King's rights or abused his opponents, over a quadrille table or a dish of bohea. Her ladyship's house swarmed with ecclesiastics, in disguise and out; with tale-bearers from St. Germains; and quidnuncs that knew the last news from Versailles; nay, the exact force and number of the next expedition which the French king was to send from Dunkirk, and which was to swallow up the Prince of Orange, his army, and his court. She had received the Duke of Berwick when he landed here in '96. She kept the glass he drank from, vowing she never would use it till she drank King James the Third's health in it on His Majesty's return; she had tokens from the Queen, and relics of the saint who, if the story was true, had not always been a saint as far as she and many others were concerned. She believed in the miracles wrought at his tomb, and had a hundred authentic stories of wondrous cures effected by the blessed king's rosaries, the medals which he wore, the locks of his hair, or what not. Esmond remembered a score of marvellous

tales, which the credulous old woman told him. There was the Bishop of Autun, that was healed of a malady he had for forty years, and which left him after he said mass for the repose of the King's soul. There was M. Marais, a surgeon in Auvergne, who had a palsy in both his legs, which was cured through the King's intercession. There was Philip Pitet, of the Benedictines, who had a suffocating cough, which well nigh killed him, but he besought relief of Heaven, through the merits and intercession of the blessed king, and he straightway felt a profuse sweat breaking out all over him, and was recovered perfectly. And there was the wife of Mons. Lepervier, dancing-master to the Duke of Saxe Gotha, who was entirely eased of a rheumatism by the King's intercession, of which miracle there could be no doubt, for her surgeon and his apprentice had given their testimony, under oath, that they did not in any way contribute to the cure. Of these tales, and a thousand like them, Mr. Esmond believed as much as he chose. His kinswoman's greater faith had swallow for them all.

The English High Church party did not adopt these legends. But truth and honour, as they thought, bound them to the exiled king's side; nor had the banished family any warmer supporter than that kind lady of Castlewood, in whose house Esmond was brought up. She influenced her husband, very much more perhaps than my lord knew, who admired his wife prodigiously though he might be inconstant to her, and who, adverse to the trouble of thinking himself, gladly enough adopted the opinions which she chose for him. To one of her simple and faithful heart, allegiance to any sovereign but the one was im-

possible. To serve King William for interest's sake would have been a monstrous hypocrisy and treason. Her pure conscience could no more have consented to it than to a theft, a forgery, or any other base action. Lord Castlewood might have been won over, no doubt, but his wife never could; and he submitted his conscience to hers in this case as he did in most others, when he was not tempted too sorely. And it was from his affection and gratitude most likely, and from that eager devotion for his mistress, which characterised all Esmond's youth, that the young man subscribed to this, and other articles of faith, which his fond benefactress set him. Had she been a Whig, he had been one; had she followed Mr. Fox, and turned Quaker, no doubt he would have abjured ruffles and a perriwig, and have forsworn swords, lace coats, and clocked stockings. In the scholars' boyish disputes at the University, where parties ran very high, Esmond was noted as a Jacobite, and very likely from vanity as much as affection took the side of his family.

Almost the whole of the clergy of the country and more than a half of the nation were on this side. Ours is the most loyal people in the world surely; we admire our kings, and are faithful to them long after they have ceased to be true to us. 'T is a wonder to any one who looks back at the history of the Stuart family, to think how they kicked their crowns away from them; how they flung away chances after chances; what treasures of loyalty they dissipated, and how fatally they were bent on consummating their own ruin. If ever men had fidelity, 't was they; if ever men squandered opportunity, 't was they; and of all

the enemies they had, they themselves were the most fatal.*

When the Princess Anne succeeded, the wearied nation was glad enough to cry a truce from all these wars, controversies, and conspiracies, and to accept in the person of a Princess of the blood royal a compromise between the parties into which the country was divided. The Tories could serve under her with easy consciences; though a Tory herself, she represented the triumph of the Whig opinion. The people of England, always liking that their Princes should be attached to their own families, were pleased to think the Princess was faithful to hers; and up to the very last day and hour of her reign, and but for that fatality which he inherited from his fathers along with their claims to the English crown, King James the Third might have worn it. But he neither knew how to wait an opportunity, nor to use it when he had it; he was venturesome when he ought to have been cautious, and cautious when he ought to have dared everything. 'T was with a sort of rage at his inaptitude that one thinks of his melancholy story. Do the Fates deal more specially with Kings than with common men? One is apt to imagine so, in considering the history of that royal race, in whose behalf so much fidelity, so much valour, so much blood were desperately and bootlessly expended.

The King dead then, the Princess Anne (ugly Anne Hyde's daughter, our dowager at Chelsea called her) was proclaimed by trumpeting heralds all over the

* *Ω ποποι, διον δη νυ θεους βροτοι αιτιοωνται*
εξ ἡμεων γαρ φασι κακ' εμμεναι, ὁι δε και αυτοι
σφησιν ατασθαλιησιν ὑπερ μορον αλγε' εχουσιν.

town from Westminster to Ludgate Hill, amidst immense jubilations of the people.

Next week my Lord Marlborough was promoted to the Garter and to be Captain-General of Her Majesty's forces at home and abroad. This appointment only inflamed the Dowager's rage, or, as she thought it, her fidelity to her rightful sovereign. "The Princess is but a puppet in the hands of that fury of a woman, who comes into my drawing-room and insults me to my face. What can come to a country that is given over to such a woman?" says the Dowager: "As for that double-faced traitor, my Lord Marlborough, he has betrayed every man and every woman with whom he has had to deal, except his horrid wife who makes him tremble. 'T is all over with the country when it has got into the clutches of such wretches as these."

Esmond's old kinswoman saluted the new powers in this way; but some good fortune at least occurred to a family which stood in great need of it, by the advancement of these famous personages who benefitted humbler people that had the luck of being in their favour. Before Mr. Esmond left England in the month of August and being then at Portsmouth where he had joined his regiment, and was busy at drill, learning the practice and mysteries of the musket and pike, he heard that a pension on the Stamp Office had been got for his late beloved mistress, and that the young Mistress Beatrix was also to be taken into court. So much good, at least, had come of the poor widow's visit to London, not revenge upon her husband's enemies, but reconcilement to old friends, who pitied, and seemed inclined to serve her. As for the comrades in prison and the late misfortune: Colonel West-

bury was with the Captain-General gone to Holland; Captain Macartney was now at Portsmouth, with his regiment of Fusileers and the force under command of his Grace the Duke of Ormond, bound for Spain it was said; my Lord Warwick was returned home; and Lord Mohun, so far from being punished for the homicide which had brought so much grief and change into the Esmond family, was gone in company of my Lord Macclesfield's splendid embassy to the Elector of Hanover, carrying the Garter to his Highness and a complimeatary letter from the Queen.

CHAPTER IV.

Recapitulations.

From such fitful lights as could be cast upon his dark history by the broken narrative of his poor patron, torn by remorse and struggling in the last pangs of dissolution, Mr. Esmond had been made to understand so far, that his mother was long since dead; and so there could be no question as regarded her or her honour, tarnished by her husband's desertion and injury, to influence her son in any steps which he might take either for prosecuting or relinquishing his own just claims. It appeared from my poor lord's hurried confession, that he had been made acquainted with the real facts of the case only two years since, when Mr. Holt visited him, and would have implicated him in one of those many conspiracies by which the secret leaders of King James's party in this country were ever endeavouring to destroy the Prince of Orange's life or power; conspiracies so like murder, so cowardly in the means used, so wicked in the end, that our nation has sure done well in throwing off all allegiance and fidelity to the unhappy family that could not vindicate its right except by such treachery, — by such dark intrigue and base agents. There were designs against King William that were no more honourable than the ambushes of cut-throats and footpads. 'T is humiliating to think that a great Prince, possessor of a great and sacred right, and upholder of a great

cause, should have stooped to such baseness of assassination and treasons as are proved by the unfortunate King James's own warrant and sign-manual given to his supporters in this country. What he and they called levying war was, in truth, no better than instigating murder. The noble Prince of Orange burst magnanimously through those feeble meshes of conspiracy in which his enemies tried to envelop him: it seemed as if their cowardly daggers broke upon the breast of his undaunted resolution. After King James's death, the Queen and her people at St. Germains — priests and women, for the most part — continued their intrigues in behalf of the young Prince, James the Third, as he was called in France and by his party here (this Prince, or Chevalier de St. George, was born in the same year with Esmond's young pupil Frank, my Lord Viscount's son): and the Prince's affairs, being in the hands of priests and women, were conducted as priests and women will conduct them, artfully, cruelly, feebly, and to a certain bad issue. The moral of the Jesuits' story I think as wholesome a one as ever was writ: the artfullest, the wisest, the most toilsome, and dexterous plot-builders in the world, — there always comes a day when the roused public indignation kicks their flimsy edifice down, and sends its cowardly enemies a-flying. Mr. Swift hath finely described that passion for intrigue, that love of secresy, slander and lying, which belongs to weak people, hangers-on of weak courts. 'T is the nature of such to hate and envy the strong, and conspire their ruin; and the conspiracy succeeds very well, and everything presages the satisfactory overthrow of the great victim; until one day Gulliver rouses himself,

shakes off the little vermin of an enemy, and walks away unmolested. Ah! the Irish soldiers might well say after the Boyne, "Change kings with us, and we will fight it over again." Indeed, the fight was not fair between the two. 'T was a weak priest-ridden, woman-ridden man, with such puny allies and weapons as his own poor nature led him to choose, contending against the schemes, the generalship, the wisdom, and the heart of a hero.

On one of these many coward's errands, then (for, as I view them now, I can call them no less), Mr. Holt had come to my lord at Castlewood, proposing some infallible plan for the Prince of Orange's destruction, in which my Lord Viscount, loyalist as he was, had indignantly refused to join. As far as Mr. Esmond could gather from his dying words, Holt came to my lord with a plan of insurrection, and offer of the renewal, in his person, of that marquis's title, which King James had conferred on the preceding viscount; and on refusal of this bribe, a threat was made, on Holt's part, to upset my Lord Viscount's claim to his estate and title of Castlewood altogether. To back this astounding piece of intelligence, of which Henry Esmond's patron now had the first light, Holt came armed with the late lord's dying declaration, after the affair of the Boyne, at Trim, in Ireland, made both to the Irish priest and a French ecclesiastic of Holt's order, that was with King James's army. Holt showed, or pretended to show, the marriage certificate of the late Viscount Esmond with my mother, in the city of Brussels, in the year 1677, when the viscount, then Thomas Esmond, was serving with the English army in Flanders; he could show, he

said, that this Gertrude, deserted by her husband long since, was alive, and a professed nun in the year 1685, at Brussels, in which year Thomas Esmond married his uncle's daughter, Isabella, now called Viscountess Dowager of Castlewood; and leaving him, for twelve hours, to consider this astounding news (so the poor dying lord said), disappeared with his papers in the mysterious way in which he came. Esmond knew how, well enough: by that window from which he had seen the father issue: — but there was no need to explain to my poor lord, only to gather from his parting lips the words which he would soon be able to utter no more.

Ere the twelve hours were over, Holt himself was a prisoner, implicated in Sir John Fenwick's conspiracy, and locked up at Hexton first, whence he was transferred to the Tower; leaving the poor Lord Viscount, who was not aware of the other's being taken, in daily apprehension of his return, when (as my Lord Castlewood declared, calling God to witness, and with tears in his dying eyes), it had been his intention at once to give up his estate and his title to their proper owner, and to retire to his own house at Walcote with his family. "And would to God I had done it," the poor lord said, "I would not be here now, wounded to death, a miserable, stricken man!"

My lord waited day after day, and, as may be supposed, no messenger came; but at a month's end Holt got means to convey to him a message out of the Tower, which was to this effect: That he should consider all unsaid that had been said, and that things were as they were.

"I had a sore temptation," said my poor lord.

"Since I had come in to this cursed title of Castlewood, which hath never prospered with me, I have spent far more than the income of that estate, and my paternal one, too. I calculated all my means down to the last shilling, and found I never could pay you back, my poor Harry, whose fortune I had had for twelve years. My wife and children must have gone out of the house dishonoured, and beggars. God knows, it hath been a miserable one for me and mine. Like a coward, I clung to that respite which Holt gave me. I kept the truth from Rachel and you. I tried to win money of Mohun, and only plunged deeper into debt; I scarce dared look thee in the face when I saw thee. This sword hath been hanging over my head these two years. I swear I felt happy, when Mohun's blade entered my side."

After lying ten months in the Tower, Holt, against whom nothing could be found, except that he was a Jesuit-priest, known to be in King James's interest, was put on ship-board by the incorrigible forgiveness of King William, who promised him, however, a hanging, if ever he should again set foot on English shore. More than once, whilst he was in prison himself, Esmond had thought where those papers could be, which the Jesuit had shown to his patron, and which had such an interest for himself. They were not found on Mr. Holt's person when that Father was apprehended, for had such been the case my lords of the council had seen them, and this family history had long since been made public. However, Esmond cared not to seek the papers. His resolution being taken; his poor mother dead; what matter to him that documents existed proving his right to a title which he was de-

termined not to claim, and of which he vowed never to deprive that family which he loved best in the world? Perhaps he took a greater pride out of his sacrifice than he would have had in those honours which he was resolved to forego. Again, as long as these titles were not forthcoming, Esmond's kinsman, dear young Francis, was the honourable and undisputed owner of the Castlewood estate and title. The mere word of a Jesuit could not overset Frank's right of occupancy, and so Esmond's mind felt actually at ease to think the papers were missing, and in their absence his dear mistress and her son the lawful Lady and Lord of Castlewood.

Very soon after his liberation, Mr. Esmond made it his business to ride to that village of Ealing where he had passed his earliest years in this country, and to see if his old guardians were still alive and inhabitants of that place. But the only relique which he found of old M. Pastoureau was a stone in the churchyard, which told that Athanasius Pastoureau, a native of Flanders, lay there buried, aged 87 years. The old man's cottage, which Esmond perfectly recollected, and the garden (where in his childhood he had passed many hours of play and reverie, and had many a beating from his termagant of a foster-mother,) were now in the occupation of quite a different family; and it was with difficulty that he could learn in the village what had come of Pastoureau's widow and children. The clerk of the parish recollected her — the old man was scarce altered in the fourteen years that had passed since last Esmond set eyes on him — it appeared she had pretty soon consoled herself after the death of her old husband, whom she ruled over,

by taking a new one younger than herself, who spent her money and ill-treated her and her children. The girl died; one of the boys 'listed; the other had gone apprentice. Old Mr. Rogers, the clerk, said he had heard that Mrs. Pastoureau was dead too. She and her husband had left Ealing this seven year; and so Mr. Esmond's hopes of gaining any information regarding his parentage from this family, were brought to an end. He gave the old clerk a crown-piece for his news, smiling to think of the time when he and his little playfellows had slunk out of the churchyard, or hidden behind the gravestones at the approach of this awful authority.

Who was his mother? What had her name been? When did she die? Esmond longed to find some one who could answer these questions to him, and thought even of putting them to his aunt the viscountess, who had innocently taken the name which belonged of right to Henry's mother. But she knew nothing or chose to know nothing, on this subject, nor, indeed, could Mr. Esmond press her much to speak on it. Father Holt was the only man who could enlighten him, and Esmond felt he must wait until some fresh chance or new intrigue might put him face to face with his old friend, or bring that restless indefatigable spirit back to England again.

The appointment to his ensigncy, and the preparations necessary for the campaign, presently gave the young gentleman other matters to think of. His new patroness treated him very kindly and liberally; she promised to make interest and pay money, too, to get him a company speedily; she bade him procure a handsome outfit, both of clothes and of arms, and was

pleased to admire him when he made his first appearance in his laced scarlet coat, and to permit him to salute her on the occasion of this interesting investiture. "Red," says she, tossing up her old head, "hath always been the colour worn by the Esmonds." And so her ladyship wore it on her own cheeks very faithfully to the last. She would have him be dressed, she said, as became his father's son, and paid cheerfully for his five-pound beaver, his black buckled perriwig, and his fine holland shirts, and his swords, and his pistols, mounted with silver. Since the day he was born, poor Harry had never looked such a fine gentleman: his liberal stepmother filled his purse with guineas, too, some of which Captain Steele and a few choice spirits helped Harry to spend in an entertainment which Dick ordered (and, indeed, would have paid for, but that he had no money when the reckoning was called for; nor would the landlord give him any more credit,) at the Garter, over against the gate of the Palace, in Pall Mall.

The old viscountess, indeed, if she had done Esmond any wrong formerly, seemed inclined to repair it by the present kindness of her behaviour: she embraced him copiously at parting, wept plentifully, bade him write by every packet, and gave him an inestimable relic, which she besought him to wear round his neck — a medal, blessed by I know not what Pope, and worn by his late sacred Majesty King James. So Esmond arrived at his regiment with a better equipage than most young officers could afford. He was older than most of his seniors, and had a further advantage which belonged but to very few of the army gentlemen in his day — many of whom could do little more than

write their names — that he had read much, both at home and at the University, was master of two or three languages, and had that further education which neither books nor years will give, but which some men get from the silent teaching of adversity. She is a great schoolmistress, as many a poor fellow knows, that hath held his hand out to her ferule, and whimpered over his lesson before her awful chair.

CHAPTER V.

I go on the Vigo Bay expedition, taste Salt Water and smell powder.

THE first expedition in which Mr. Esmond had the honour to be engaged, rather resembled one of the invasions projected by the redoubted Captain Avory, or Captain Kid, than a war between crowned heads, carried on by generals of rank and honour. On the 1st day of July, 1702, a great fleet, of a hundred and fifty sail, set sail from Spithead, under the command of Admiral Shovell, having on board 12,000 troops, with his Grace the Duke of Ormond as the Capt.-General of the expedition. One of these 12,000 heroes having never been to sea before, or, at least, only once in his infancy, when he made the voyage to England from that unknown country where he was born, — one of those 12,000 — the junior ensign of Col. Quin's regiment of Fusileers — was in a quite unheroic state of corporal prostration a few hours after sailing; and an enemy, had he boarded the ship, would have had easy work of him. From Portsmouth we put into Plymouth, and took in fresh reinforcements. We were off Finisterre on the 31st of July, so Esmond's table-book informs him; and on the 8th of August made the rock of Lisbon. By this time the ensign was grown as bold as an admiral, and a week afterwards had the fortune to be under fire for the first time, — and, under water, too, — his boat being swamped in the surf in Toros bay, where the troops landed. The ducking of his new coat was all the harm the young

soldier got in this expedition, for, indeed, the Spaniards made no stand before our troops, and were not in strength to do so.

But the campaign, if not very glorious, was very pleasant. New sights of nature, by sea and land, — a life of action, beginning, now, for the first time, — occupied and excited the young man. The many accidents, and the routine of shipboard, — the military duty, — the new acquaintances, both of his comrades in arms, and of the officers of the fleet, served to cheer and occupy his mind, and waken it out of that selfish depression into which his late unhappy fortunes had plunged him. He felt as if the ocean separated him from his past care, and welcomed the new era of life which was dawning for him. Wounds heal rapidly in a heart of two-and-twenty; hopes revive daily; and courage rallies, in spite of a man. Perhaps, as Esmond thought of his late despondency and melancholy, and how irremediable it had seemed to him, as he lay in his prison a few months back, he was almost mortified in his secret mind at finding himself so cheerful.

To see with one's own eyes men and countries, is better than reading all the books of travel in the world; and it was with extreme delight and exultation that the young man found himself actually on his grand tour, and in the view of people and cities which he had read about as a boy. He beheld war, for the first time — the pride, pomp, and circumstance of it, at least, if not much of the danger. He saw actually, and with his own eyes, those Spanish cavaliers and ladies whom he had beheld in imagination in that immortal story of Cervantes, which had been the delight of his youthful leisure. 'T is forty

years since Mr. Esmond witnessed those scenes, but they remain as fresh in his memory as on the day when first he saw them as a young man. A cloud, as of grief, that had lowered over him, and had wrapped the last years of his life in gloom, seemed to clear away from Esmond during this fortunate voyage and campaign. His energies seemed to awaken and to expand, under a cheerful sense of freedom. Was his heart secretly glad to have escaped from that fond but ignoble bondage at home? Was it that the inferiority to which the idea of his base birth had compelled him, vanished with the knowledge of that secret, which though, perforce, kept to himself, was yet enough to cheer and console him? At any rate, young Esmond of the army was quite a different being to the sad little dependent of the kind Castlewood household, and the melancholy student of Trinity Walks; discontented with his fate, and with the vocation into which that drove himself, and thinking, with a secret indignation, that the cassock and bands, and the very sacred office with which he had once proposed to invest himself, were, in fact, but marks of a servitude which was to continue all his life long. For, disguise it as he might to himself, he had all along felt that to be Castlewood's chaplain was to be Castlewood's inferior still, and that his life was but to be a long, hopeless servitude. So, indeed, he was far from grudging his old friend Tom Tusher's good fortune (as Tom, no doubt, thought it). Had it been a mitre and Lambeth which his friends offered him, and not a small living and a country parsonage, he would have felt as much a slave in one case as in the other, and was quite happy and thankful to be free.

The bravest man I ever knew in the army, and who had been present in most of King William's actions, as well as in the campaigns of the great Duke of Marlborough, could never be got to tell us of any achievement of his, except that once Prince Eugene ordered him up a tree to reconnoitre the enemy, which feat he could not achieve on account of the horseman's boots he wore; and on another day that he was very nearly taken prisoner because of these jack-boots, which prevented him from running away. The present narrator shall imitate this laudable reserve, and doth not intend to dwell upon his military exploits, which were, in truth, not very different from those of a thousand other gentlemen. This first campaign of Mr. Esmond's lasted but a few days; and as a score of books have been written concerning it, it may be dismissed very briefly here.

When our fleet came within view of Cadiz, our commander sent a boat with a white flag and a couple of officers to the Governor of Cadiz, Don Scipio de Brancaccio, with a letter from his Grace, in which he hoped that as Don Scipio had formerly served with the Austrians against the French in England, 't was to be hoped that his Excellency would now declare himself against the French king and for the Austrian in the war between King Philip and King Charles. But his Excellency, Don Scipio, prepared a reply, in which he announced that, having served his former king with honour and fidelity, he hoped to exhibit the same loyalty and devotion towards his present sovereign, King Philip V.; and by the time this letter was ready, the officers, who had been taken to see the town, and the alameda, and the theatre,

where bull-fights are fought, and the convents, where the admirable works of Don Bartholomew Murillo inspired one of them with a great wonder and delight — such as he had never felt before — concerning this divine art of painting; and these sights over, and a handsome refection and chocolate being served to the English gentlemen, they were accompanied back to their shallop with every courtesy, and were the only two officers of the English army that saw at that time that famous city.

The General tried the power of another proclamation on the Spaniards, in which he announced that we only came in the interest of Spain and King Charles, and for ourselves wanted to make no conquest nor settlement in Spain at all. But all this eloquence was lost upon the Spaniards, it would seem: the Captain-General of Andalusia would no more listen to us than the Governor of Cadiz; and in reply to his Grace's proclamation, the Marquis of Villadarias fired off another, which those who knew the Spanish thought rather the best of the two; and of this number was Harry Esmond, whose kind Jesuit in old days had instructed him, and now had the honour of translating for his Grace these harmless documents of war. There was a hard touch for his Grace, and, indeed, for other generals in Her Majesty's service, in the concluding sentence of the Don. "That he and his council had the generous example of their ancestors to follow, who had never yet sought their elevation in the blood or in the flight of their kings. '*Mori pro patria*' was his device, which the Duke might communicate to the Princess who governed England."

Whether the troops were angry at this repartee or no, 't is certain something put them in a fury, for not being able to get possession of Cadiz, our people seized upon Port Saint Mary's and sacked it, burning down the merchants' storehouses, getting drunk with the famous wines there; pillaging and robbing quiet houses and convents, murdering and doing worse. And the only blood which Mr. Esmond drew in this shameful campaign, was the knocking down an English sentinel with a half-pike, who was offering insult to a poor trembling nun. Is she going to turn out a beauty? — or a princess? — or perhaps Esmond's mother that he had lost and never seen? Alas no, it was but a poor wheezy old dropsical woman, with a wart on her nose. But having been early taught a part of the Roman religion, he never had the horror of it that some Protestants have shown and seem to think to be a part of ours.

After the pillage and plunder of St. Mary's, and an assault upon a fort or two, the troops all took shipping and finished their expedition, at any rate more brilliantly than it had begun. Hearing that the French fleet with a great treasure was in Vigo Bay, our Admirals, Rooke and Hopson, pursued the enemy thither; the troops landed and carried the forts that protected the bay, Hopson passing the boom first on board his ship the Torbay, and the rest of the ships, English and Dutch, following him. Twenty ships were burned or taken in the Port of Redondilla, and a vast deal more plunder than was ever accounted for; but poor men before that expedition were rich afterwards, and so often was it found and remarked that the Vigo officers came home with pockets full of

money, that the notorious Jack Shafto who made such a figure at the coffee-houses and gaming-tables in London, and gave out that he had been a soldier at Vigo; owned when he was about to be hanged, that Bagshot Heath had been *his* Vigo, and that he only spoke of La Redondilla to turn away people's eyes from the real place where the booty lay. Indeed, Hounslow or Vigo — which, matters much? The latter was a bad business, though Mr. Addison did sing its praises in Latin. That honest gentleman's muse had an eye to the main chance; and I doubt whether she saw much inspiration in the losing side.

But though Esmond, for his part, got no share of this fabulous booty, one great prize which he had out of the campaign was, that excitement of action and change of scene, which shook off a great deal of his previous melancholy. He learnt at any rate to bear his fate cheerfully. He brought back a browned face, a heart resolute enough, and a little pleasant store of knowledge and observation, from that expedition, which was over with the autumn, when the troops were back in England again; and Esmond giving up his post of secretary to General Lumley, whose command was over, and parting with that officer with many kind expressions of good will on the General's side, had leave to go to London to see if he could push his fortunes any way further, and found himself once more in his dowager aunt's comfortable quarters at Chelsea, and in greater favour than ever with the old lady. He propitiated her with a present of a comb, a fan, and a black mantle, such as the ladies of Cadiz wear, and which my Lady Viscountess pronounced became her style of beauty mightily. And she

was greatly edified at hearing of that story of his rescue of the nun, and felt very little doubt but that her King Jame's relic, which he had always dutifully worn in his desk, had kept him out of danger, and averted the shot of the enemy. My lady made feasts for him, introduced him to more company, and pushed his fortunes with snch enthusiasm and success that she got a promise of a company for him through the Lady Marlborough's interest, who was graciously pleased to accept of a diamond worth a couple of hundred guineas, which Mr. Esmond was enabled to present to her ladyship through his aunt's bounty, and who promised that she would take charge of Esmond's fortune. He had the honour to make his appearance at the Queen's drawing-room occasionally and to frequent my Lord Marlborough's levees. That great man received the young one with very especial favour, so Esmond's comrades said, and deigned to say that he had received the best reports of Mr. Esmond, both for courage and ability, whereon you may be sure the young gentleman made a profound bow, and expressed himself eager to serve under the most distinguished captain in the world.

Whilst his business was going on thus prosperously, Esmond had his share of pleasure, too, and made his appearance along with other young gentlemen at the coffee-houses, the theatres, and the Mall. He longed to hear of his dear mistress and her family: many a time, in the midst of the gaieties and pleasures of the town, his heart fondly reverted to them; and often as the young fellows of his society were making merry at the tavern, and calling toasts (as the fashion of that day was) over their wine, Esmond thought of persons

— of two fair women, whom he had been used to adore almost, and emptied his glass with a sigh.

By this time the elder viscountess had grown tired again of the younger, and whenever she spoke of my lord's widow, 't was in terms by no means complimentary towards that poor lady: the younger woman not needing her protection any longer, the elder abused her. Most of the family quarrels that I have seen in life (saving always those arising from money-disputes, when a division of twopence halfpenny will often drive the dearest relatives into war and estrangement,) spring out of jealousy and envy. Jack and Tom, born of the same family and to the same fortune, live very cordially together, not until Jack is ruined when Tom deserts him, but until Tom makes a sudden rise in prosperity, which Jack can't forgive. Ten times to one 't is the unprosperous man that is angry, not the other who is in fault. 'T is Mrs. Jack, who can only afford a chair, that sickens at Mrs. Tom's new coach-and-six, cries out against her sister's airs, and sets her husband against his brother. 'T is Jack who sees his brother shaking hands with a lord (with whom Jack would like to exchange snuff-boxes himself); that goes home and tells his wife how poor Tom is spoiled, he fears, and no better than a sneak, parasite, and beggar on horseback. I remember how furious the coffee-house wits were with Dick Steele when he set up his coach, and fine house in Bloomsbury: they began to forgive him when the bailiffs were after him, and abused Mr. Addison for selling Dick's country-house. And yet Dick in the spunging-house, or Dick in the Park, with his four mares and plated harness, was exactly the same gentle, kindly, improvident, jovial

Dick Steele: and yet Mr. Addison was perfectly right in getting the money which was his, and not giving up the amount of his just claim, to be spent by Dick upon champagne and fiddlers, laced clothes, fine furniture, and parasites, Jew and Christian, male and female, who clung to him. As, according to the famous maxim of Monsieur de Rochefoucault, "in our friends misfortunes there 's something secretly pleasant to us;" so, on the other hand, their good fortune is disagreeable. If 't is hard for a man to bear his own good luck, 't is harder still for his friends to bear it for him; and but few of them ordinarily can stand that trial: whereas one of the "precious uses" of adversity is, that it is a great reconciler; that it brings back averted kindness, disarms animosity, and causes yesterday's enemy to fling his hatred aside, and hold out a hand to the fallen friend of old days. There 's pity and love, as well as envy, in the same heart and towards the same person. The rivalry stops when the competitor tumbles; and, as I view it, we should look at these agreeable and disagreeable qualities of our humanity humbly alike. They are consequent and natural, and our kindness and meanness both manly.

So you may either read the sentence, that the elder of Esmond's two kinswomen pardoned the younger her beauty, when that had lost somewhat of its freshness, perhaps; and forgot most her grievances against the other, when the subject of them was no longer prosperous and enviable; or we may say more benevolently (but the sum comes to the same figures, worked either way), that Isabella repented of her unkindness towards Rachel, when Rachel was unhappy; and bestirring herself in behalf of the poor widow and her children, gave

them shelter and friendship. The ladies were quite good friends as long as the weaker one needed a protector. Before Esmond went away on his first campaign, his mistress was still on terms of friendship (though a poor little chit, a woman that had evidently no spirit in her, &c.) with the elder Lady Castlewood; and Mistress Beatrix was allowed to be a beauty.

But between the first year of Queen Anne's reign, and the second, sad changes for the worse had taken place in the two younger ladies, at least, in the elder's description of them. Rachel, Viscountess Castlewood, had no more face than a dumpling, and Mrs. Beatrix was grown quite coarse, and was losing all her beauty. Little Lord Blandford — (she never would call him Lord Blandford; his father was Lord Churchill — the King, whom he betrayed, had made him Lord Churchill, and he was Lord Churchill still) — might be making eyes at her; but his mother, that vixen of a Sarah Jennings, would never hear of such a folly. Lady Marlborough had got her to be a maid of honour at court to the Princess, but she would repent of it. The widow Francis (she was but Mrs. Francis Esmond,) was a scheming, artful, heartless hussey. She was spoiling her brat of a boy, and she would end by marrying her chaplain.

"What, Tusher!" cried Mr. Esmond, feeling a strange pang of rage and astonishment.

"Yes — Tusher, my maid's son; and who has got all the qualities of his father, the lacquey in black, and his accomplished mamma, the waiting woman," cries my lady. "What, do you suppose that a sentimental widow, who will live down in that dingy dungeon of a Castlewood, where she spoils her boy, kills the poor

with her drugs, has prayers twice a day, and sees nobody but the chaplain — what do you suppose she can do, *mon Cousin*, but let the horrid parson, with his great square toes, and hideous little green eyes, make love to her? *Cela c'est vu*, *mon Cousin*. When I was a girl at Castlewood, all the chaplains fell in love with me — they 've nothing else to do."

My lady went on with more talk of this kind, though, in truth, Esmond had no idea of what she said further, so entirely did her first words occupy his thought. Were they true? Not all, nor half, nor a tenth part of what the garrulous old woman said, was true. Could this be so? No ear had Esmond for anything else, though his patroness chattered on for an hour.

Some young gentlemen of the town with whom Esmond had made acquaintance had promised to present him to that most charming of actresses, and lively and agreeable of women, Mrs. Bracegirdle, about whom Harry's old adversary Mohun had drawn swords, a few years before my poor lord and he fell out. The famous Mr. Congreve had stamped with his high approval, to the which there was no gainsaying, this delightful person; and she was acting in Dick Steele's comedies, and finally, and for twenty-four hours after beholding her, Mr. Esmond felt himself, or thought himself, to be as violently enamoured of this lovely brunette, as were a thousand other young fellows about the city. To have once seen her was to long to behold her again; and to be offered the delightful privilege of her acquaintance was a pleasure the very idea of which set the young lieutenant's heart on fire. A man cannot live with comrades under the tents without finding out that he

too is five-and-twenty. A young fellow cannot be cast down by grief and misfortune ever so severe but some night he begins to sleep sound, and some day when dinner time comes to feel hungry for a beefstake. Time, youth, and good health, new scenes and the excitement of action and a campaign had pretty well brought Esmond's mourning to an end; and his comrades said that Don Dismal, as they called him, was Don Dismal no more. So when a party was made to dine at the Rose and go to the playhouse afterward, Esmond was as pleased as another to take his share of the bottle and the play.

How was it that the old aunt's news, or it might be scandal about Tom Tusher, caused such a strange and sudden excitement in Tom's old play-fellow? Hadn't he sworn a thousand times in his own mind, that the Lady of Castlewood, who had treated him with such kindness once, and then had left him so cruelly, was, and was to remain henceforth, indifferent to him for ever? Had his pride, and his sense of justice not long since helped him to cure the pain of that desertion — was it even a pain to him now? Why, but last night as he walked across the fields and meadows to Chelsea from Pall Mall, had he not composed two or three stanzas of a song, celebrating Bracegirdle's brown eyes, and declaring them a thousand times more beautiful than the brightest blue ones that ever languished under the lashes of an insipid fair beauty. But Tom Tusher! Tom Tusher, the waiting woman's son, raising up *his* little eyes to his mistress! Tom Tusher presuming to think of Castlewood's widow! Rage and contempt filled Mr. Harry's heart at the very notion; the honour of the family, of which he was the

chief, made it his duty to prevent so monstrous an alliance, and to chastise the upstart who could dare to think of such an insult to their house. 'T is true Mr. Esmond often boasted of republican principles and could remember many fine speeches he had made at College and elsewhere, with *worth* and not *birth* for a text: but Tom Tusher, to take the place of the noble Castlewood — faugh! 't was as monstrous as King Hamlet's widow taking off her weeds for Claudius. Esmond laughed at all widows, all wives, all women; and were the banns about to be published, as no doubt they were, that very next sunday at Walcote Church; Esmond swore that he would be present to shout no! in the face of the congregation, and to take a private revenge upon the ears of the bridegroom.

Instead of going to dinner then at the Rose that night, Mr. Esmond bade his servant pack a portmantua and get horses, and was at Farnham, half way on the road to Walcote, thirty miles off, before his comrades had got to their supper after the play. He bade his man give no hint to my Lady Dowager's household of the expedition on which he was going: and as Chelsea was distant from London, the roads bad, and infested by foot-pads; and Esmond, often in the habit, when engaged in a party of pleasure, of lying at a friend's lodging in town, there was no need that his old aunt should be disturbed at his absence — indeed nothing more delighted the old lady than to fancy that *Mon cousin*, the incorrigible young sinner, was abroad boxing the watch, or scouring St. Giles's. When she was not at her books of devotion, she thought Etheridge and Sedley very good reading. She had a hundred pretty stories about Rochester; Harry Jermyn, and Hamilton;

and if Esmond would but have run away with the wife even of a citizen, 't is my belief she would have pawned her diamonds (the best of them went to our Lady of Chaillot) to pay his damages

My lord's little house of Walcote, which he inhabited before he took his title and occupied the house of Castlewood — lies about a mile from Winchester, and his widow had returned to Walcote after my lord's death as a place always dear to her, and where her earliest and happiest days had been spent, cheerfuller than Castlewood, which was too large for her straightened means, and giving her, too, the protection of the ex-Dean, her father. The young viscount had a year's schooling at the famous college there with Mr. Tusher as his governor. So much news of them Mr. Esmond had had during the past year from the old viscountess, his own father's widow; from the young one there had never been a word.

Twice or thrice in his benefactor's lifetime, Esmond had been to Walcote; and, now, taking but a couple of hours rest only at the inn on the road, he was up again long before day-break, and made such good speed, that he was at Walcote by two o'clock of the day. He rid to the inn of the village, where he alighted and sent a man thence to Mr. Tusher with a message that a gentleman from London would speak with him on urgent business. The messenger came back to say the Doctor was in town, most likely at prayers in the Cathedral. My Lady Viscountess was there too: she always went to Cathedral prayers every day.

The horses belonged to the post-house at Winchester. Esmond mounted again, and rode on to the

George; whence he walked, leaving his grumbling domestic at last happy with a dinner, straight to the Cathedral. The organ was playing: the winter's day was already growing grey: as he passed under the street-arch into the cathedral-yard and made his way into the ancient solemn edifice.

CHAPTER VI.

The 29th December.

There was scarce a score of persons in the Cathedral besides the Dean and some of his clergy, and the choristers, young and old, that performed the beautiful evening prayer. But Dr. Tusher was one of the officiants, and read from the eagle, in an authoritative voice, and a great black perriwig; and in the stalls, still in her black widow's hood, sate Esmond's dear mistress, her son by her side, very much grown, and indeed a noble-looking youth, with his mother's eyes, and his father's curling brown hair, that fell over his *point de Venise* — a pretty picture such as Vandyke might have painted. Mons. Rigaud's portrait of my Lord Viscount, done at Paris afterwards, gives but a French version of his manly, frank English face. When he looked up there were two sapphire beams out of his eyes, such as no painter's palette has the colour to match, I think. On this day there was not much chance of seeing that particular beauty of my young lord's countenance; for the truth is, he kept his eyes shut for the most part, and, the anthem being rather long, was asleep.

But the music ceasing, my lord woke up, looking about him, and his eyes lighting on Mr. Esmond, who was sitting opposite him, gazing with no small tenderness and melancholy upon two persons who had had so much of his heart for so many years; Lord Castlewood, with a start, pulled at his mother's sleeve

(her face had scarce been lifted from her book), and said, "Look, mother!" so loud, that Esmond could hear on the other side of the church, and the old Dean on his throned stall. Lady Castlewood looked for an instant as her son bade her, and held up a warning finger to Frank; Esmond felt his whole face flush, and his heart throbbing, as that dear lady beheld him once more. The rest of the prayers were speedily over: Mr. Esmond did not hear them; nor did his mistress, very likely, whose hood went more closely over her face, and who never lifted her head again until the service was over, the blessing given, and Mr. Dean, and his procession of ecclesiastics, out of the inner chapel.

Young Castlewood came clambering over the stalls before the clergy were fairly gone, and running up to Esmond, eagerly embraced him. "My dear, dearest old Harry," he said, "are you come back? Have you been to the wars? You 'll take me with you when you go again? Why didn't you write to us? Come to mother."

Mr. Esmond could hardly say more than a God bless you, my boy, for his heart was very full and grateful at all this tenderness on the lad's part; and he was as much moved at seeing Frank, as he was fearful about that other interview which was now to take place; for he knew not if the widow would reject him as she had done so cruelly a year ago.

"It was kind of you to come back to us, Henry," Lady Esmond said. "I thought you might come."

"We read of the fleet coming to Portsmouth. Why did you not come from Portsmouth?" Frank asked, or my Lord Viscount as he now must be called.

Esmond had thought of that too. He would have given one of his eyes so that he might see his dear friends again once more; but believing that his mistress had forbidden him her house, he had obeyed her, and remained at a distance.

"You had but to ask, and you knew I would be here," he said.

She gave him her hand, her little fair hand: there was only her marriage ring on it. The quarrel was all over. The year of grief and estrangement was passed. They never had been separated. His mistress had never been out of his mind all that time. No, not once. No, not in the prison; nor in the camp; nor on shore before the enemy; not at sea under the stars of solemn midnight, nor as he watched the glorious rising of the dawn: not even at the table where he sate carousing with friends, or at the theatre yonder where he tried to fancy that other eyes were brighter than hers. Brighter eyes there might be, and faces more beautiful, but none so dear — no voice so sweet as that of his beloved mistress, who had been sister, mother, goddess to him during his youth — goddess now no more, for he knew of her weaknesses; and by thought, by suffering, and that experience it brings, was older now than she; but more fondly cherished as woman perhaps than ever she had been adored as divinity. What is it? Where lies it? the secret which makes one little hand the dearest of all? Whoever can unriddle that mystery? Here she was, her son by his side, his dear boy. Here she was, weeping and happy. She took his hand in both hers; he felt her tears. It was a rapture of reconciliation.

"Here comes Squaretoes," says Frank "Here's Tusher."

Tusher, indeed, now appeared, creaking on his great heels. Mr. Tom had divested himself of his alb or surplice, and came forward habited in his cassock and great black perriwig. How had Harry Esmond ever been for a moment jealous of this fellow?

"Give us thy hand, Tom Tusher," he said. The chaplain made him a very low and stately bow. "I am charmed to see Captain Esmond," says he. "My lord and I have read the *Reddas incolumem precor*, and applied it, I am sure, to you. You come back with Gaditanian laurels; when I heard you were bound thither, I wished, I am sure, I was another Septimius. My Lord Viscount, your lordship remembers *Septimi, Gades aditure mecum?*"

"There's an angle of earth that I love better than Gades, Tusher," says Mr. Esmond. "'T is that one where your reverence hath a parsonage, and where our youth was brought up."

"A house that has so many sacred recollections to me," says Mr. Tusher (and Harry remembered how Tom's father used to flog him there) — "a house near to that of my respected patron, my most honoured patroness, must ever be a dear abode to me. But, Madam, the verger waits to close the gates on your ladyship."

'And Harry's coming home to supper. Huzzay! huzzay!" cries my lord. "Mother, shall I run home and bid Beatrix put her ribbons on. Beatrix is a maid of honour, Harry. Such a fine set-up minx!"

"Your heart was never in the Church, Harry," the

widow said, in her sweet low tone, as they walked away together." (Now, it seemed they had never been parted, and again, as if they had been ages asunder.) "I always thought you had no vocation that way; and that 't was a pity to shut you out from the world. You would but have pined and chafed at Castlewood: and 't is better you should make a name for yourself. I often said so to my dear lord. How he loved you! 'T was my lord that made you stay with us."

"I asked no better than to stay near you always," said Mr. Esmond.

"But to go was best, Harry. When the world cannot give peace, you will know where to find it; but one of your strong imagination and eager desires must try the world first before he tires of it. 'T was not to be thought of, or if it once was, it was only by my selfishness, that you should remain as chaplain to a country gentleman and tutor to a little boy. You are of the blood of the Esmonds, kinsman; and that was always wild in youth. Look at Francis. He is but fifteen, and I scarce can keep him in my nest. His talk is all of war and pleasure, and he longs to serve in the next campaign. Perhaps he and the young Lord Churchill shall go the next. Lord Marlborough has been good to us. You know how kind they were in my misfortune. And so was your — your father's widow. No one knows how good the world is, till grief comes to try us. 'T is through my Lady Marlborough's goodness that Beatrix hath her place at court; and Frank is under my Lord Chamberlain. And the dowager lady, your father's widow, has promised to provide for you — has she not?"

Esmond said "Yes." As far as present favour went,

Lady Castlewood was very good to him. "And should her mind change," he added gaily, "as ladies' minds will, I am strong enough to bear my own burthen, and make my way somehow. Not by the sword very likely. Thousands have a better genius for that than I, but there are many ways in which a young man of good parts and education can get on in the world: and I am pretty sure, one way or other, of promotion?" Indeed, he had found patrons already in the army, and amongst persons very able to serve him, too; and told his mistress of the flattering aspect of fortune. They walked as though they had never been parted, slowly, with the grey twilight closing round them.

"And now we are drawing near to home," she continued. "I knew you would come, Harry, if - if it was but to forgive me for having spoken unjustly to you after that horrid — horrid misfortune. I was half frantic with grief then, when I saw you. And I know now — they have told me. That wretch, whose name I can never mention, even has said it: how you tried to avert the quarrel, and would have taken it on yourself, my poor child: but it was God's will that I should be punished, and that my dear lord should fall."

"He gave me his blessing on his death-bed," Esmond said. "Thank God for that legacy!"

"Amen, amen! dear Henry," says the lady, pressing his arm. "I knew it. Mr. Atterbury, of St. Bride's, who was called to him, told me so. And I thanked God, too, and in my prayers ever since, remembered it."

"You had spared me many a bitter night, had you told me sooner," Mr. Esmond said.

"I know it, I know it," she answered, in a tone of such sweet humility, as made Esmond repent that he should ever have dared to reproach her. "I know how wicked my heart has been; and I have suffered, too, my dear. I confessed to Mr. Atterbury — I must not tell any more. He — I said I would not write to you or go to you — and it was better, even, that having parted, we should part. But I knew you would come back — I own that. That is no one's fault. And to-day, Henry, in the anthem, when they sang it, 'When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream,' I thought, yes, like them that dream — them that dream. And then it went, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy; and he that goeth forth and weepeth, shall doubtless come home again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;' I looked up from the book, and saw you. I was not surprised when I saw you. I knew you would come, my dear, and saw the gold sunshine round your head."

She smiled an almost wild smile, as she looked up at him. The moon was up by this time, glittering keen in the frosty sky. He could see, for the first time now clearly, her sweet care-worn face.

"Do you know what day it is?" she continued. "It is the 29th of December — it is your birthday! But last year we did not drink it — no, no. My lord was cold, and my Harry was likely to die; and my brain was in a fever; and we had no wine. But now — now you are come again, bringing your sheaves with you, my dear." She burst into a wild flood of

weeping as she spoke; she laughed and sobbed on the young man's heart, crying out wildly, "bringing your sheaves with you — your sheaves with you!"

As he had sometimes felt, gazing up from the deck at midnight into the boundless starlit depths overhead, in a rapture of devout wonder at that endless brightness and beauty — in some such a way now, the depth of this pure devotion (which was, for the first time, revealed to him quite) smote upon him, and filled his heart with thanksgiving. Gracious God, who was he, weak and friendless creature, that such a love should be poured out upon him? Not in vain, not in vain has he lived, — hard and thankless should he be to think so — that has such a treasure given him. What is ambition compared to that? but selfish vanity. To be rich, to be famous? What do these profit a year hence, when other names sound louder than yours, when you lie hidden away under ground, along with the idle titles engraven on your coffin? But only true love lives after you, — follows your memory with secret blessing, — or precedes you, and intercedes for you. *Non omnis moriar*, — if dying, I yet live in a tender heart or two; nor am lost and hopeless living, if a sainted departed soul still loves and prays for me.

"If — if 't is so, dear Lady," Mr. Esmond said, "why should I ever leave you? If God hath given me this great boon, — and near or far from me, as I know now, — the heart of my dearest mistress follows me; let me have that blessing near me, nor ever part with it till life separate us. Come away — leave this Europe, this place which has so many sad recollections for you. Begin a new life in a new world. My good lord often talked of visiting that land in Virginia which

King Charles gave us — gave his ancestor. Frank will give us that. No man there will ask if there is a blot on my name, or inquire in the woods what my title is."

"And my children, — and my duty, — and my good father? — Henry," she broke out. "He has none but me now; for soon my sister will leave him, and the old man will be alone. He has conformed since the new Queen's reign; and here in Winchester, where they love him, they have found a church for him. When the children leave me, I will stay with him. I cannot follow them into the great world, where their way lies — it scares me. They will come and visit me; and you will, sometimes, Henry — yes, sometimes, as now, in the Holy Advent season, when I have seen and blessed you once more."

"I would leave all to follow you," said Mr. Esmond; "and can you not be as generous for me, dear lady?"

"Hush, boy!" she said, and it was with a mother's sweet plaintive tone and look that she spoke. "The world is beginning for you. For me, I have been so weak and sinful that I must leave it, and pray out an expiation, dear Henry. Had we houses of religion as there were once, and many divines of our church would have them again, I often think I would retire to one and pass my life in penance. But I would love you still — yes, there is no sin in such a love as mine now; and my dear lord in heaven may see my heart; and knows the tears that have washed my sin away — and now — now my duty is here, by my children whilst they need me, and by my poor old father, and" —

"And not by me?" Henry said.

"Hush," she said again, and raised her hand up to his lip. "I have been your nurse. You could not see me, Harry, when you were in the small-pox, and I came and sate by you. Ah! I prayed that I might die, but it would have been in sin, Henry. O it is horrid to look back to that time. It is over now and past, and it has been forgiven me. When you need me again I will come ever so far. When your heart is wounded, then come to me, my dear. Be silent! let me say all. You never loved me, dear Henry — no, you do not now, and I thank Heaven for it. I used to watch you, and knew by a thousand signs that it was so. Do you remember how glad you were to go away to College? 'T was I sent you. I told my papa that, and Mr. Atterbury too, when I spoke to him in London. And they both gave me absolution — both — and they are godly men having authority to bind and to loose. And they forgave me, as my dear lord forgave me before he went to heaven."

"I think the angels are not all in heaven," Mr. Esmond said. And as a brother folds a sister to his heart; and as a mother cleaves to her son's breast — so for a few moments Esmond's beloved mistress came to him and blessed him.

CHAPTER VII.

I am made welcome at Walcote.

As they came up to the house at Walcote, the windows from within were lighted up with friendly welcome; the supper-table was spread in the oak parlour; it seemed as if forgiveness and love were awaiting the returning prodigal. Two or three familiar faces of domestics were on the look-out at the porch — the old house-keeper was there, and young Lockwood from Castlewood in my lord's livery of tawney and blue. His dear mistress pressed his arm as they passed into the hall. Her eyes beamed out on him with affection indescribable. "Welcome," was all she said: as she looked up, putting back her fair curls and black hood. A sweet rosy smile blushed on her face; Harry thought he had never seen her look so charming. Her face was lighted with a joy that was brighter than beauty — she took a hand of her son who was in the hall waiting his mother — she did not quit Esmond's arm.

"Welcome, Harry!" my young lord echoed after her. "Here, we are all come to say so. Here 's old Pincot, hasn't she grown handsome?" and Pincot, who was older, and no handsomer than usual, made a curtsey to the Captain as she called Esmond, and told my lord to "Have done, now."

"And here 's Jack Lockwood. He 'll make a famous grenadier Jack; and so shall I; we 'll both list under you, Cousin. As soon as I am seventeen I go to the

army — every gentleman goes to the army. Look! who comes here — ho, ho!" he burst into a laugh, "'T is Mistress 'Trix, with a new ribbon; I knew she would put one on as soon as she heard a Captain was coming to supper."

This laughing colloquy took place in the hall of Walcote House: in the midst of which is a staircase that leads from an open gallery, where are the doors of the sleeping chambers: and from one of these, a wax candle in her hand, and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix — the light falling indeed upon the scarlet ribbon which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world.

Esmond had left a child, and found a woman, grown beyond the common height; and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty, that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting, that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible: and that night the great Duke was at the play-house after Ramillies, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty: that is, her eyes, hair, and eye-brows and eye-lashes, were dark: her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine; except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose

voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace — agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen — now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic, there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes, feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

So she came holding her dress with one fair rounded arm, and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to greet Esmond.

"She hath put on her scarlet stockings and white shoes," says my lord, still laughing. "O, my fine mistress! is this the way you set your cap at the Captain!" She approached, shining smiles upon Esmond, who could look at nothing but her eyes. She advanced holding forward her head, as if she would have him kiss her as he used to do when she was a child.

"Stop," she said, "I am grown too big! Welcome, cousin Harry," and she made him an arch curtsey, sweeping down to the ground almost, with the most gracious bend, looking up the while with the brightest eyes and sweetest smile. Love seemed to radiate from her. Harry eyed her with such a rapture as the first lover is described as having by Milton.

"*N'est ce pas?*" says my lady, in a low, sweet voice, still hanging on his arm.

Esmond turned round with a start and a blush, as he met his mistress's clear eyes. He had forgotten her, wrapt in admiration of the *filia pulcrior*.

"Right foot forward, toe turned out, so: now drop

the curtsey, and show the red stockings, 'Trix. They 've silver clocks, Harry. The dowager sent 'em. She went to put 'em on," cries my lord.

"Hush, you stupid child!" says Miss, smothering her brother with kisses; and then she must come and kiss her mamma, looking all the while at Harry, over his mistress's shoulder. And if she did not kiss him, she gave him both her hands, and then took one of his in both hands, and said, "Oh, Harry, we 're so, *so* glad you 're come!"

"There are woodcocks for supper," says my lord: "Huzzay! It was such a hungry sermon."

"And it is the 29th of December; and our Harry has come home."

"Huzzay, old Pincot!" again says my lord; and my dear lady's lips looked as if they were trembling with a prayer. She would have Harry lead in Beatrix to the supper-room, going herself with my young Lord Viscount; and to this party came Tom Tusher directly, whom four at least out of the company of five, wished away. Away he went, however, as soon as the sweetmeats were put down, and then, by the great crackling fire, his mistress or Beatrix with her blushing graces filling his glass for him, Harry told the story of his campaign, and passed the most delightful night his life had ever known. The sun was up long ere he was, so deep, sweet, and refreshing was his slumber. He woke as if angels had been watching at his bed all night. I daresay one that was as pure and loving as an angel had blest his sleep with her prayers.

Next morning the chaplain read prayers to the little household at Walcote, as the custom was; Es-

mond thought Mistress Beatrix did not listen to Tusher's exhortation much; her eyes were wandering everywhere during the service, at least whenever he looked up he met them. Perhaps he also was not very attentive to his Reverence the chaplain. "This might have been my life," he was thinking; "this might have been my duty from now till old age. Well, were it not a pleasant one to be with these dear friends and part from 'em no more? Until — until the destined lover comes and takes away pretty Beatrix" — and the best part of Tom Tusher's exposition, which may have been very learned and eloquent, was quite lost to poor Harry by this vision of the destined lover, who put the preacher out.

All the while of the prayers, Beatrix knelt a little way before Harry Esmond. The red stockings were changed for a pair of grey, and black shoes, in which her feet looked to the full as pretty. All the roses of spring could not vie with the brightness of her complexion; Esmond thought he had never seen anything like the sunny lustre of her eyes. My Lady Viscountess looked fatigued, as if with watching, and her face was pale.

Miss Beatrix remarked these signs of indisposition in her mother, and deplored them. "I am an old woman," says my lady, with a kind smile; "I cannot hope to look as young as you do, my dear."

"She 'll never look as good as you do if she lives till she 's a hundred," says my lord, taking his mother by the waist, and kissing her hand.

"Do I look very wicked, cousin?" says Beatrix, turning full round on Esmond, with her pretty face so close under his chin, that the soft perfumed hair

touched it. She laid her finger-tips on his sleeve as she spoke; and he put his other hand over hers.

"I'm like your looking-glass," says he, "and that can't flatter you."

"He means that you are always looking at him, my dear," says her mother, archly. Beatrix ran away from Esmond at this, and flew to her mamma, whom she kissed, stopping my lady's mouth with her pretty hand.

"And Harry is very good to look at," says my lady, with her fond eyes regarding the young man.

"If 't is good to see a happy face," says he, "you see that." My lady said Amen, with a sigh; and Harry thought the memory of her dead lord rose up and rebuked her back again into sadness; for her face lost the smile, and resumed its look of melancholy.

"Why, Harry, how fine we look in our scarlet and silver, and our black perriwig," cries my lord. "Mother, I am tired of my own hair. When shall I have a perruke? Where did you get your steenkirk, Harry?"

"It's some of my Lady Dowager's lace," says Harry; "she gave me this and a number of other fine things."

"My Lady Dowager isn't such a bad woman," my lord continued.

"She's not so — so red as she's painted," says Miss Beatrix.

Her brother broke into a laugh. "I'll tell her you said so; by the Lord, 'Trix, I will," he cries out.

"She'll know that you hadn't the wit to say it, my lord," says Miss Beatrix.

"We won't quarrel the first day Harry's here, will we, mother?" said the young lord. "We'll see if we

can get on to the new year without a fight. Have some of this Christmas pie? and here comes the tankard; no, it's Pincot with the tea."

"Will the Captain choose a dish?" asks Mistress Beatrix.

"I say, Harry," my lord goes on, "I'll show thee my horses after breakfast; and we'll go a bird-netting to-night, and on Monday there's a cock-match at Winchester — do you love cock-fighting, Harry? — between the gentlemen of Sussex and the gentlemen of Hampshire, at ten pound the battle, and fifty pound the odd battle, to show one-and-twenty cocks."

"And what will you do, Beatrix, to amuse our kinsman?" asks my lady.

"I'll listen to him," says Beatrix; "I am sure he has a hundred things to tell us. And I'm jealous already of the Spanish ladies. Was that a beautiful nun at Cadiz that you rescued from the soldiers? Your man talked of it last night in the kitchen, and Mrs. Betty told me this morning as she combed my hair. And he says you must be in love, for you sate on deck all night, and scribbled verses all day in your table-book." Harry thought if he had wanted a subject for verses yesterday, to-day he had found one: and not all the Lindamiras and Ardelias of the poets were half so beautiful as this young creature; but he did not say so, though some one did for him.

This was his dear lady who, after the meal was over, and the young people were gone, began talking of her children with Mr. Esmond, and of the characters of one and the other, and of her hopes and fears for both of them. "'T is not while they are at home," she said, "and in their mother's nest, I fear for them

— 't is when they are gone into the world whither I shall not be able to follow them. Beatrix will begin her service next year. You may have heard a rumour about — about my Lord Blandford. They were both children; and it is but idle talk. I know my kinswoman would never let him make such a poor marriage as our Beatrix would be. There 's scarce a princess in Europe that she thinks is good enough for him or for her ambition."

"There 's not a princess in Europe to compare with her," says Esmond.

"In beauty? No, perhaps not," answered my lady. "She is most beautiful, isn't she? 'T is not a mother's partiality that deceives me. I marked you yesterday when she came down the stair: and read it in your face. We look when you don't fancy us looking, and see better than you think, dear Harry: and just now when they spoke about your poems — you writ pretty lines when you were but a boy — you thought Beatrix was a pretty subject for verse, did not you, Harry? (The gentleman could only blush for a reply.) And so she is — nor are you the first her pretty face has captivated. 'T is quickly done. Such a pair of bright eyes as hers learn their power very soon, and use it very early." And, looking at him keenly with hers, the fair widow left him.

And so it is — a pair of bright eyes with a dozen glances suffice to subdue a man; to enslave him, and enflame him; to make him even forget: they dazzle him so that the past becomes straightway dim to him: and he so prizes them that he would give all his life to possess 'em. What is the fond love of dearest friends compared to this treasure? Is memory as strong as

expectancy? fruition, as hunger? gratitude, as desire? I have looked at royal diamonds in the jewel rooms in Europe, and thought how wars have been made about 'em; Mogul sovereigns deposed and strangled for them, or ransomed with them; millions expended to buy them; and daring lives lost in digging out the little shining toys that I value no more than the button in my hat. And so there are other glittering baubles (of rare water too) for which men have been set to kill and quarrel ever since mankind began: and which last but for a score of years, when their sparkle is over. Where are those jewels now that beamed under Cleopatra's forehead, or shone in the sockets of Helen?

The second day after Esmond's coming to Walcote, Tom Tusher had leave to take a holiday and went off in his very best gown and bands to court the young woman whom his Reverence desired to marry, and who was not a viscount's widow, as it turned out, but a brewer's relict at Southampton, with a couple of thousand pounds to her fortune: for honest Tom's heart was under such excellent controul, that Venus herself without a portion would never have caused it to flutter. So he rode away on his heavy-paced gelding to pursue his jog-trot loves, leaving Esmond to the society of his dear mistress and her daughter, and with his young lord for a companion, who was charmed not only to see an old friend, but to have the tutor and his Latin books put out of the way.

The boy talked of things and people, and not a little about himself, in his frank artless way. 'Twas easy to see that he and his sister had the better of their fond mother, for the first place in whose affections

though they fought constantly; and though the kind lady persisted that she loved both equally, 't was not difficult to understand that Frank was his mother's darling and favourite. He ruled the whole household (always excepting rebellious Beatrix) not less now than when he was a child marshalling the village boys in playing at soldiers, and caning them lustily too like the sturdiest corporal. As for Tom Tusher, his Reverence treated the young lord with that politeness and deference which he always showed for a great man, whatever his age or his stature was. Indeed with respect to this young one, it was impossible not to love him, so frank and winning were his manners, his beauty, his gaiety, the ring of his laughter, and the delightfnl tone of his voice. Wherever he went, he charmed and domineered. I think his old grandfather, the Dean, and the grim old house-keeper, Mrs. Pincot, were as much his slaves as his mother was: and as for Esmond, he found himself presently submitting to a certain fascination the boy had, and slaving it like the rest of the family. The pleasure which he had in Harry's mere company and converse, exceeded that which he ever enjoyed in the society of any other man, however delightful in talk, or famous for wit. His presence brought sunshine into a room, his laugh, his prattle, his noble beauty, and brightness of look cheered and charmed indescribably. At the least tale of sorrow, his hands were in his purse, and he was eager with sympathy and bounty. The way in which women loved and petted him, when, a year or two afterwards, he came upon the world, yet a mere boy, and the follies which they did for him, (as indeed he for them,) recalled the career of Rochester, and outdid

the successes of Grammont. His very creditors loved him; and the hardest usurers, and some of the rigid prudes of the other sex too, could deny him nothing. He was no more witty than another man, but what he said, he said and looked as no man else could say or look it. I have seen the women at the comedy at Bruxelles crowd round him in the lobby: and as he sate on the stage more people looked at him than at the actors, and watched him; and I remember at Ramillies, when he was hit, and fell, a great big red-haired Scotch sergeant flung his halberd down, burst out a-crying like a woman, seizing him up as if he had been an infant, and carrying him out of the fire. This brother and sister were the most beautiful couple ever seen: though after he winged away from the maternal nest this pair were seldom together.

Sitting at dinner two days after Esmond's arrival (it was the last day of the year), and so happy a one to Harry Esmond, that to enjoy it was quite worth all the previous pain which he had endured and forgot: my young lord, filling a bumper, and bidding Harry take another, drank to his sister, saluting her under the title of "Marchioness."

"Marchioness!" says Harry, not without a pang of wonder, for he was curious and jealous already.

"Nonsense, my Lord," says Beatrix, with a toss of her heard. My Lady Viscountess looked up for a moment at Esmond, and cast her eyes down.

"The Marchioness of Blandford," says Frank, "don't you know — hath not Rouge Dragon told you? (My lord used to call the dowager at Chelsea by this and other names.) Blandford has a lock of her hair: the Duchess found him on his knees to Mistress 'Trix,

and boxed his ears, and said Dr. Hare should whip him."

"I wish Mr. Tusher would whip you too," says Beatrix.

My lady only said: "I hope you tell none of these silly stories elsewhere than at home, Francis."

"'Tis true, on my word," continues Frank: "look at Harry scowling, mother, and see how Beatrix blushes as red as the silver-clocked stockings."

"I think we had best leave the gentlemen to their wine, and their talk," says Mistress Beatrix, rising up with the air of a young queen, tossing her rustling, flowing draperies about her, and quitting the room, followed by her mother.

Lady Castlewood again looked at Esmond, as she stooped down and kissed Frank. "Do not tell those silly stories, child," she said: "do not drink much wine, Sir; Harry never loved to drink wine." And she went away, too, in her black robes, looking back on the young man with her fair, fond face.

"Egad! it's true," says Frank, sipping his wine with the air of a lord. "What think you of this Lisbon — real Collares? 'Tis better than your heady port: we got it out of one of the Spanish ships that came from Vigo last year: my mother bought it at Southampton, as the ship was lying there, — the Rose, Captain Hawkins."

"Why, I came home in that ship," says Harry.

"And it brought home a good fellow and good wine," says my lord. "I say, Harry, I wish thou hadst not that cursed bar sinister."

"And why not the bar sinister?" asks the other.

"Suppose I go to the army and am killed — every

gentleman goes to the army — who is to take care of the women? 'Trix will never stop at home; mother's in love with you, — yes, I think mother's in love with you. She was always praising you, and always talking about you; and when she went to Southampton, to see the ship, I found her out. But you see it is impossible: we are of the oldest blood in England; we came in with the Conqueror; we were only baronets, — but what then? we were forced into that. James the First forced our great grandfather. We are above titles; we old English gentry don't want 'em; the Queen can make a duke any day. Look at Blandford's father, Duke Churchill, and Duchess Jennings, what were they, Harry? Damn it, Sir, what are they, to turn up their noses at us? Where were they, when our ancestor rode with King Henry at Agincourt, and filled up the French king's cup after Poictiers? 'Fore George, Sir, why shouldn't Blandford marry Beatrix? By G—! he *shall* marry Beatrix, or tell me the reason why. We'll marry with the best blood of England, and none but the best blood of England. You are an Esmond, and you can't help your birth, my boy. Let's have another bottle. What! no more? I've drunk three parts of this myself. I had many a night with my father; you stood to him like a man, Harry. You backed your blood; you can't help your misfortune, you know, — no man can help that."

The elder said, he would go in to his mistress's tea-table. The young lad, with a heightened colour and voice, began singing a snatch of a song, and marched out of the room. Esmond heard him presently calling his dogs about him, and cheering and talking to them; and by a hundred of his looks and

gestures, tricks of voice and gait, was reminded of the dead lord, Frank's father.

And so, the sylvester night passed away; the family parted long before midnight, Lady Castlewood remembering, no doubt, former New Years' Eves, when healths were drunk, and laughter went round in the company of him, to whom years, past, and present, and future, were to be as one; and so cared not to sit with her children and hear the Cathedral bells ringing the birth of the year 1703. Esmond heard the chimes as he sat in his own chamber, ruminating by the blazing fire there, and listened to the last notes of them, looking out from his window towards the city, and the great grey towers of the Cathedral lying under the frosty sky, with the keen stars shining above.

The sight of these brilliant orbs no doubt made him think of other luminaries. "And so her eyes have already done execution," thought Esmond — "on whom? — who can tell me?" Luckily his kinsman was by, and Esmond knew he would have no difficulty in finding out Mistress Beatrix's history from the simple talk of the boy.

CHAPTER VIII.

Family talk.

WHAT Harry admired and submitted to in the pretty lad, his kinsman, was (for why should he resist it?) the calmness of patronage which my young lord assumed, as if to command was his undoubted right, and all the world (below his degree) ought to bow down to Viscount Castlewood.

"I know my place, Harry," he said. "I'm not proud — the boys at Winchester College say I'm proud: but I'm not proud. I am simply Francis James Viscount Castlewood in the peerage of Ireland. I might have been (do you know that?) Francis James, Marquis and Earl of Esmond, in that of England. The late lord refused the title which was offered to him by my godfather, his late Majesty. You should know that — you are of our family, you know — you cannot help your bar sinister, Harry, my dear fellow; and you belong to one of the best families in England, in spite of that; and you stood by my father; and by G—! I'll stand by you. You shall never want a friend, Harry, while Francis James Viscount Castlewood has a shilling. It's now 1703 — I shall come of age in 1709. I shall go back to Castlewood; I shall live at Castlewood; I shall build up the house. My property will be pretty well restored by then. The late viscount mismanaged my property, and left it in a very bad state My mother is living close, as

you see, and keeps me in a way hardly befitting a peer of these realms; for I have but a pair of horses, a governor, and a man that is valet and groom. But when I am of age, these things will be set right, Harry. Our house will be as it should be. You'll always come to Castlewood, won't you? You shall always have your two rooms in the court kept for you; and if anybody slights you, d— them! let them have a care of *me*. I shall marry early — 'Trix will be a duchess by that time, most likely; for a cannon-ball may knock over his Grace any day, you know."

"How?" says Harry.

"Hush, my dear!" says my Lord Viscount. "You are of the family — you are faithful to us, by George, and I tell you everything. Blandford will marry her — or — " and here he put his little hand on his sword — "you understand the rest. Blandford knows which of us two is the best weapon. At small-sword, or back-sword, or sword and dagger, if he likes: I can beat him. I have tried him, Harry; and begad, he knows I am a man not to be trifled with."

"But you do not mean," says Harry, concealing his laughter, but not his wonder, "that you can force my Lord Blandford, the son of the first man of this kingdom, to marry your sister at sword's point?"

"I mean to say that we are cousins by the mother's side, though that's nothing to boast of. I mean to say that an Esmond is as good as a Churchill; and when the King comes back, the Marquis of Esmond's sister may be a match for any nobleman's daughter in the kingdom. There are but two marquises in all England, William Herbert, Marquis of Powis, and Francis James, Marquis of Esmond; and hark you,

Harry, now swear you'll never mention this. Give me your honour, as a gentleman, for you *are* a gentleman, though you are a —"

"Well, well," says Harry, a little impatient.

"Well, then, when after my late viscount's misfortune, my mother went up with us to London, to ask for justice against you all (as for Mohun, I'll have his blood, as sure as my name is Francis Viscount Esmond), we went to stay with our cousin, my Lady Marlborough, with whom we had quarrelled for ever so long. But when misfortune came, she stood by her blood; — so did the Dowager Viscountess stand by her blood, — so did you. Well, Sir, whilst my mother was petitioning the late Prince of Orange — for I will never call him king — and while you were in prison, we lived at my Lord Marlborough's house, who was only a little there, being away with the army in Holland. And then . . . I say, Harry, you won't tell, now?"

Harry again made a vow of secrecy.

"Well, there used to be all sorts of fun, you know: my Lady Marlborough was very fond of us, and she said I was to be her page; and she got 'Trix to be a maid of honour, and while she was up in her room crying, we used to be always having fun, you know; and the Duchess used to kiss me, and so did her daughters, and Blandford fell tremendous in love with 'Trix, and she liked him; and one day he — he kissed her behind a door — he did though, — and the Duchess caught him, and she banged such a box of the ear both to 'Trix and Blandford — you should have seen it! And then she said that we must leave directly, and abused my mamma, who was cognizant of the

business; but she wasn't, — never thinking about anything but father. And so we came down to Walcote. Blandford being locked up, and not allowed to see 'Trix. But *I* got at him. I climbed along the gutter, and in through the window, where he was crying.

"'Marquis,' says I, when he had opened it and helped me in, 'you know I wear a sword,' for I had brought it.

"'O, Viscount!' says he — 'O, my dearest Frank! and he flung himself into my arms, and burst out a-crying. 'I do love Mistress Beatrix so, that I shall die, if I don't have her.'

"'My dear Blandford,' says I, 'you are young to think of marrying; for he was but fifteen, and a young fellow at that age can scarce do so, you know.'

"'But I'll wait twenty years, if she'll have me,' says he. 'I'll never marry — no never, never, never, marry anybody but her. No, not a princess, though they would have me do it ever so. If Beatrix will wait for me, her Blandford swears he will be faithful.' And he wrote a paper (it wasn't spelt right, for he wrote 'I'm ready to *sine with my blode*,' which you know, Harry, isn't the way of spelling it), and vowing that he would marry none other but the Honourable Mistress Gertrude Beatrix Esmond, only sister of his dearest friend Francis James, fourth Viscount Esmond. And so I gave him a locket of her hair."

"A locket of her hair!" cries Esmond.

"Yes. 'Trix gave me one after the fight with the Duchess that very day. I'm sure I didn't want it; and so I gave it him, and we kissed at parting, and said — 'Good-bye, brother.' And I got back through the gutter; and we set off home that very evening.

And he went to King's College, in Cambridge, and *I'm* going to Cambridge soon; and if he doesn't stand to his promise (for he 's only wrote once,) — he knows I wear a sword, Harry. Come along, and let 's go see the cocking-match at Winchester."

". . . . But I say," he added, laughing, after a pause, "I don't think 'Trix will break her heart about him. Law bless you! Whenever she sees a man, she makes eyes at him; and young Sir Wilmot Crawley, of Queen's Crawley, and Anthony Henley, of Alresford, were at swords drawn about her, at the Winchester Assembly, a month ago."

That night Mr. Harry's sleep was by no means so pleasant or sweet as it had been on the first two evenings after his arrival at Walcote. "So, the bright eyes have been already shining on another," thought he, "and the pretty lips, or the cheeks at any rate, have begun the work which they were made for. Here 's a girl not sixteen, and one young gentleman is already whimpering over a lock of her hair, and two country squires are ready to cut each other's throats that they may have the honour of a dance with her. What a fool am I to be dallying about this passion, and singeing my wings in this foolish flame. Wings! — why not say crutches? There is but eight years difference between us, to be sure; but in life I am thirty years older. How could I ever hope to please such a sweet creature as that, with my rough ways and glum face? Say that I have merit ever so much, and won myself a name, could she ever listen to me? She must be my Lady Marchioness, and I remain a nameless bastard. Oh! my Master, my Master! (here he fell to thinking with a passionate

grief of the vow which he had made to his poor dying lord); Oh! my Mistress, dearest and kindest, will you be contented with the sacrifice which the poor orphan makes for you, whom you love, and who so loves you?"

And then came a fiercer pang of temptation. "A word from me," Harry thought, "a syllable of explanation, and all this might be changed; but no, I swore it over the dying bed of my benefactor. For the sake of him and his; for the sacred love and kindness of old days; I gave my promise to him, and may kind Heaven enable me to keep my vow!"

The next day, although Esmond gave no sign of what was going on in his mind, but strove to be more than ordinarily gay and cheerful when he met his friends at the morning meal, his dear mistress, whose clear eyes it seemed no emotion of his could escape, perceived that something troubled him, for she looked anxiously towards him more than once during the breakfast, and when he went up to his chamber afterwards she presently followed him, and knocked at his door.

As she entered, no doubt the whole story was clear to her at once, for she found our young gentleman packing his valise, pursuant to the resolution which he had come to over-night of making a brisk retreat out of this temptation.

She closed the door very carefully behind her, and then leant against it, very pale, her hands folded before her, looking at the young man, who was kneeling over his work of packing. "Are you going so soon?" she said.

He rose up from his knees, blushing, perhaps, to